



*Photograph: Elliott & Fry*

E. M. WRIGHT

1923

The Life of  
JOSEPH WRIGHT

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By ELIZABETH, MARY WRIGHT

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VOLUME II

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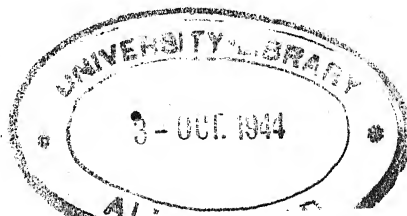
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## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE ENGLISH DIALECT DICTIONARY

THE English Dialect Dictionary opens with the following dedication:

*To the Rev. Professor W. W. Skeat, Litt.D., D.C.L.  
Founder and President of the English Dialect Society  
Editor of 'Chaucer', 'Piers Plowman', and 'The Bruce'*

The unwearied Worker in the varied Field of English Scholarship To whose patient industry and contagious enthusiasm in connexion with the laborious task of accumulating dialect material the possibility of compiling an adequate Dictionary of English Dialects is mainly due.

On the title-page the Dictionary is stated to be 'The complete vocabulary of all dialect words still in use or known to have been in use during the last two hundred years'; and further, that it is 'Founded on the publications of the English Dialect Society and on a large amount of material never before printed'. In order, therefore, to understand the beginnings of the Dialect Dictionary it will be necessary to look into the early history of the Dialect Society. Professor Skeat gives some account of it in the Introduction to *A Student's Pastime*.<sup>1</sup> 'At a meeting of the Philological Society of London, held on January 7, 1858, it was resolved—"that, instead of the *Supplement* to the standard English Dictionaries . . . a *New Dictionary of the English Language* should be prepared under the authority of the Philological Society". Committees were formed to develop this scheme, and the first practical result of their work was the founding of the Early English Text Society, started by Dr. Furnivall in 1864. Before long they discovered that some knowledge of modern English dialects was essential, for that 'in compiling the vocabulary of words admitted into the *New*

<sup>1</sup> By the Rev. W. W. Skeat, Oxford, 1896, pp. xxi ff.

*English Dictionary*, it was often extremely difficult to know where to draw the line. It has sometimes happened that a word which in olden times may fairly be said to have been in general use . . . is now only heard in some provincial dialect, being unknown to nearly all the inhabitants of the rest of England; and, on the other hand, a word which was once used, as it would seem from the evidence, in one dialect only, has now become familiar to everybody. It follows from this that the collection of provincial words is absolutely necessary for completing the material with which the lexicographer has to deal; and hence Mr. Ellis and others suggested the establishment of an English Dialect Society. A letter written by Mr. Aldis Wright to *Notes and Queries* in March 1870, was particularly explicit as to this necessity, and contained the ominous warning that "in a few years it will be too late." Professor Skeat being 'deeply impressed with the incontrovertible truth of this statement' took upon himself the duties of an honorary secretary, he wrote 'the necessary prospectus for the formation of such a society', and the English Dialect Society was started at Cambridge in 1873. In a newspaper paragraph dated May 18, 1874, he states, 'the number of members is now more than 260'. After a report of present progress, and future intentions of the Society, there is the following sentence, pointing to the Dialect Dictionary as the ultimate object: 'The whole work is very extensive, dealing as it does with the dialect of every district in which varieties of English speech are found, whether in Great Britain, or Wales, or Ireland. Perhaps some nine or ten years may see the chief part of the work accomplished, after which will come the labour of compiling a complete and exhaustive provincial glossary, probably of considerable size.'

In March 1876 the head-quarters of the Society were transferred from Cambridge to Manchester, when J. H. Nodal became the secretary and G. Milner the treasurer, and a Committee was formed for the future conduct of affairs. Mr. Nodal, besides being a philologist interested in English

dialects, was also the editor of the *Manchester City News*, hence the proceedings at the annual meetings of the Society were very fully reported in that paper. I have before me an account of a meeting in 'the Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall', held on February 3, 1877. The members now numbered about 350, but more were needed, as many glossaries were ready for publication, but funds were insufficient. Mr. James Crossley, the president of the Chetham Society, in moving a vote of thanks to Professor Skeat for his valuable services, said that 'the Society had no doubt been well conducted in Cambridge, but now that it had come down to Manchester it would be a thousand pities—nay, it would be a great dishonour—if it were not taken up with energy and vigour'. He knew of 'no place where a useful Society, if established on a sound basis, was less likely to lack pecuniary support than in Manchester'. It was resolved that the subscription should be 'advanced from half-a-guinea to £1 per annum'.

The account<sup>1</sup> of the annual meeting held in 1884 is headed, 'Proposed Dialect Dictionary'. Professor Skeat had come to Manchester for the first time to address the Society. He told the members that he hoped it would be recorded of him in future years that he 'established the English Dialect Society', and he proceeded to give an account of its growth and extension, till 'the work had become enormous', and he found himself obliged to give up the secretaryship. Then—to quote the report—'After a reference to the works issued by the society during 1883, he said the principal subject he had to speak about was the preparation of an English Dialect Dictionary. . . . What they wanted was for somebody to give them £5,000, and then he thought the thing would be done. If that could not be accomplished a fund must be raised by subscription. He felt so strongly himself on the subject that he should be glad to give a subscription of £50, which at any rate would be a beginning.' This is the earliest reference I have been able to discover concerning the fund which he actually started in 1886 for the

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester City News*, April 5, 1884.

purpose of helping to defray the expenses of collecting and arranging the material for the Dictionary. The appeal was supported by the Committee of the English Dialect Society, but all the work connected with the preparation and publication of the Dictionary was to be carried on by a separate organization. The Rev. A. Smythe Palmer was to act for the present as editor, for the sum of £100 per annum, and Professor Skeat became Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the new 'English Dialect Dictionary Fund'. Mr. Smythe Palmer—it was understood—acted as an organizing editor, to receive quotations from correspondents, and to arrange them for the use of a future editor of the Dialect Dictionary. Hundreds of people in all parts of the United Kingdom co-operated to collect new material; and the Dialect Society continued its work of printing and publishing local glossaries.

It is clear from Joseph Wright's early letters to Professor Holthausen, that his *Grammar of the Dialect of Windhill* had been accepted for publication by the Dialect Society fully a year before he left Germany. Professor Skeat must have known something about the author through the Society, or through some prominent north-country member; and now when the time had come that he must look round for a man who would be competent to take in hand and bring to a fulfilment the great project towards which he and so many others had zealously prepared the way ever since 1873, his thoughts turned to Joseph Wright. By good fortune the letter containing the first suggestion of the editorship is still extant. I found it stored safely in a well-worn pocket-book, together with other relics belonging to Heidelberg and Leipzig days. I give it here in full:

*From Rev. Prof. Skeat*

*2 Salisbury Villas. Cambridge.*

*June 13, 1887.*

DEAR SIR,

I shd. be glad to know—from time to time—your address. I obtained what I hope is correctly y<sup>r</sup> present address from Mr. Nodal.

I have 2 propositions to make to you: I shd. be truly thankful to know what you think of them.

1. The Univ<sup>y</sup> of Toronto (Canada) requires a Professor of English (including Anglo-Saxon). They offer £500 a year, & there are Vacations, including a Long Vacation from June to October. Would it be at all likely that you wd. care to accept such an offer? Please reply soon to this.

2. Suppose the answer to the above is *no*. I have now a second question.

We hope to have some day a big Dialect Dictionary. Mr. Palmer is provisional editor *pro tem*, for collection of material. But we want a good man for final editor. He should be a phonetician, a philologist, & shd. have some dialect knowledge. I cannot tell whether you consider it within your power or not. Do you think you could do it: & if so, will you undertake it?

As to the emolument, I cannot say: nor how long it wd. take. But I think the (Cambridge) Pitt Press will undertake the work some day: & I suppose they would hardly give less than £150 a year for preparing the work, & perhaps more for editing. But this letter is merely a preliminary 'feeler' to ascertain whether there is any probability that you wd. care to help us.

There is an utter dearth of fitness for it. I hope it will not collapse in consequence.

yours sincerely,

W. W. SKEAT.

It is much to be regretted that no trace of the reply to this letter could be found amongst Professor Skeat's papers, though we all know the gist of it by what happened afterwards. And when one considers the decisive steps in his career from boyhood up to this point, one can be certain that the glamour of £500 a year in Toronto would make no appeal to Joseph Wright. On January 17, 1889, he said in a letter to Professor Holthausen: 'I shall edit the projected Dialect Dictionary.' There were no more funds available to pay even the small sum of £100 per annum given to Mr. Palmer for reducing the



materials to preliminary order, and after 1889 his services could no longer be retained. The materials were then handed over to Joseph Wright as the future editor. He prepared a specimen page of the Dialect Dictionary which was printed at the Pitt Press, Cambridge, mainly at the private expense of Professor Skeat; there was, however, as yet no thought of compiling the Dictionary itself, beyond accumulating material. In letters to me, which I have previously quoted (July 25, 1889, and July 12, 1890), there are sentences which plainly indicate that his mind was full of his new task, and there is, moreover, a note of defiance in his reference to people who were callous or scornful about 'English dialects', and who looked down on the serious philologist as 'at least eccentric if not quite a lunatic'.

A copy of the 'Third Annual Report of the English Dialect Dictionary Fund', dated 1890, and drawn up by Mr. Palmer, gives details of the general scheme: 'The last year, like the preceding one, has been spent in collecting and reducing into a practicable shape the rough material out of which the Dialect Dictionary is to be constructed. . . . As to our present stage of progress, almost all the known glossaries of the different dialects have been transcribed—a word to a slip—in accordance with our "Rules". To supply idioms and illustrations of usage, all such books and pamphlets as are written in dialect have been read for quotations. Our next object is to gather up those incidental notices and uses of provincial English which lie scattered here and there in the highways and by-ways of general literature, e.g. in plays, novels, guide-books, county histories, newspapers, etc. This is a much more difficult task, and requires the co-operation of many readers. . . . I should be glad of additional help in this direction.' At the end is a rather gloomy 'Treasurer's Report' of the Dictionary Fund, by Professor Skeat: 'I regret that I have no good news for the Subscribers who have so kindly helped us hitherto. The Cambridge University Press, on further consideration, cannot undertake the responsibility of printing our Dialect Dictionary, as we once

hoped might have been the case. We are now endeavouring to find another publisher. Pending negotiations, I have nothing definite to report. If all endeavours fail, the money hitherto advanced will be returned to all Subscribers who do not decline to receive it.' The 'Account for the year ending December 31, 1889', with which the Report closes, states: 'Balance at the Bank (December 31, 1889) £16 10s. *od.*'

The material handed over to Joseph Wright when Mr. Palmer's temporary editorship ceased, consisted of 'slips', i.e. pieces of paper, the size of a half-sheet of ordinary note-paper, each with one word written on it, and giving pronunciation, meaning, county where the word is used, and an illustrative sentence. He calculated that they numbered over a million, and weighed about a ton. The slips for the letter S alone weighed nearly 2 cwt. Far from being satisfied with this, the future editor now calculated that before the Dictionary could even be begun, twice this amount of material was absolutely necessary. He prepared and sent out thousands of copies of a circular describing the plan and scope of the proposed work, and emphasizing the need for more help 'to make the material as complete as possible before we begin to prepare the work for press'. He addressed public meetings in important centres, and encouraged the formation of additional local committees. He sent the circular to all the principal newspapers and public libraries in the United Kingdom, and before long the number of voluntary helpers in different parts of the British Isles amounted to 600.

In 1893 the head-quarters of the English Dialect Society were removed from Manchester<sup>1</sup> to Oxford, and Joseph Wright undertook to act as Honorary Secretary and Literary Director of the Society, in addition to all the business connected with the special branch of it more closely concerned with the production of the Dictionary. The Dialect Society was brought to an end in 1896; for after the Dictionary had been begun, there was no longer any necessity to continue its existence. It had been the

<sup>1</sup> Vide *The Speaker*, April 7, 1894.

means of publishing eighty volumes, all of which were subsequently incorporated in the Dictionary.

Professor Skeat in the testimonial he wrote (Nov. 5, 1900) when Joseph Wright was a candidate for the Professorship of Comparative Philology, referred to the labours of the Dialect Society which he had founded, and then said: 'The work came at last to an absolute standstill, owing to the impossibility of finding an editor capable of compiling a dictionary from the materials. It was soon perceived that no one but an accomplished phonetician could hope for any success. . . . After the work had thus been at a standstill for at least a couple of years (if I remember rightly), I was so fortunate as to discover in Dr. Wright the only man capable of undertaking the task.' Besides being a trained philologist and phonetician with an intimate knowledge of one English dialect and a working knowledge of the rest, he had enormous latent powers of organization and indomitable self-reliance. The magnitude of the task before him fired his zeal and increased his strength. In a letter to me (June 5, 1894), which I have previously quoted, is the significant phrase 'my proposed dial. dictionary', and the further statement 'there is no one else who can do it'. The question of a publisher willing to be responsible for the printing was yet in the air, but Joseph Wright had now drawn up a specimen<sup>1</sup> of the dictionary he intended to create, and the struggle towards his goal was becoming more and more a personal one. As far as the question of enrolling more workers went, his efforts steadily continued to bear fruit. One of his best helpers in the North was Mr. Oliver Heslop of Newcastle-on-Tyne. The following paragraph appeared in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* (Oct. 22, 1894): 'Professor Wright and Professor Skeat will find that in this district at any rate, there is no lack of sympathy or enthusiasm as regards the gigantic work of a general Dialect Dictionary projected by them. We are informed by Mr. R. Oliver Heslop that a Dialect Dictionary Committee for Northumberland has already been formed.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Letter to E. M. Lea, June 5, 1894.

October 6, 1894.

DEAR SIR,

'THE ENGLISH DIALECT DICTIONARY.'

IN order that the enclosed Circular might become widely known in your district, I should be very thankful if you would kindly draw the attention of your numerous readers to its contents.

*The English Dialect Dictionary* is a work of great national importance, but unless I am able to obtain further additional help from my fellow-countrymen in order to enable me to make the material as complete as possible, I shall, however reluctantly, be obliged to relinquish all idea of editing the Dictionary. If you were to write a short notice of the work in your paper pointing out its great importance, I feel sure that the help required would be forthcoming at once, as there must be many people in your district who are interested in the welfare of English dialectology. I should also be glad if you would kindly point out that contributions of dialect words, however small, will be most thankfully received.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

JOSEPH WRIGHT.

LETTER SENT TO NEWSPAPERS APPEALING  
FOR MATERIAL FOR THE E.D.D.



Mr. Heslop has undertaken the arduous duties of secretary, and the committee comprises some fifteen or sixteen gentlemen of the locality all admirably qualified to lend assistance.' Newspapers all over the country gave publicity to the appeal for workers in articles and paragraphs giving their own special commendations on the choice of editor and blessings on his enterprise. The West Riding of Yorkshire openly congratulated itself: 'The choice of editor-in-chief of such an undertaking is necessarily an important matter, and it is no mean compliment to Yorkshiremen, and especially to those resident in this locality, that Dr. Joseph Wright, a native of Windhill, has been unanimously selected for the position. . . . His Grammar of the Windhill Dialect has just been published by the English Dialect Society.'<sup>1</sup> Some of the most ardent advocates of the Dictionary were the writers of dialect books and glossaries which had been brought out by the Dialect Society. They eagerly welcomed Joseph Wright as editor, and hastened to enlist recruits for his army of workers. Mr. F. J. Elworthy, author of the *West Somerset Word-book* (1888), &c., wrote (Oct. 12, 1894): 'I am glad to see that the Dialect Dictionary is going ahead & still more that you can see your way to the doing of it—now I know it will be done thoroughly.

'So soon as my book is out of hand, my services so far as they are of use are at your command, and I think I see my way to do a good deal. . . . I have enlisted one young lady for you . . . who will supply some original matter as well as help. I also recommend you to enlist as a reader my brother in law. . . .'

An article which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of December 6, 1894, is specially interesting because it was the result of a personal interview, and Joseph Wright himself looked over the proof-sheets before publication: 'A Pall Mall representative called the other day on Dr. Joseph Wright, Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, who has undertaken the work of editing an English Dialect Dictionary. . . . [He] was good enough to exhibit the material already

<sup>1</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, October 9, 1894.

collected, which consists of somewhere over a ton of half-sheets of note-paper. . . . And this material is but a beginning. Professor Wright appeals to all who are interested to help according to their ability. . . . It is interesting to learn that the editor recently received an offer from a family of eight, stating that, though completely ignorant of dialects, they would one and all be glad to devote an hour a day to the cutting up of glossaries. There is need of others to read novels, agricultural treatises, sporting books, and so on with the same devotion, and to make slips for the dialect words occurring therein. The Pall Mall representative found the editor in the act of examining a pile of over 300 slips, which had been the result of such a reading of three books on farriery. There is practically no end to the material, and the need of workers is endless. Professor Wright stated that Mr. Dartnell of Salisbury, whose glossary of Wiltshire words was lately published by the Dialect Society, is reading Cotgrave, and calculates that it will yield somewhere like 10,000 slips. This work of reading books for the Dictionary is best done by means of Committees. By a simple system of slips Professor Wright is able to discover in a few minutes what books relating to any district have or have not already been read. Then, in the event of his finding two or three helpers residing near to one another, he writes and suggests that they should form themselves into a committee and work together. The committee, being formed, appoints a secretary, and by this means alone Professor Wright is eased by having to correspond with one helper instead of with many. . . . Professor Wright states . . . that his helpers are most numerous and most enthusiastic in the North of England and in the West. Cornishmen, Yorkshiremen, Lancashiremen, and the men of Northumberland are eager to help in the work of preserving the folk-speech of their respective birthplaces; but in Kent and Surrey—to take examples—there is no such anxiety on the part of the natives. At any rate, enthusiasts are rarer. . . . There is a great deal of dialect which has never yet got itself printed, and it is this which Professor Wright is particularly anxious to get hold

of, inasmuch as it will undoubtedly be extinct in the course of a generation or two, when they are dead in whose memories alone it survives. . . . A specimen page of the Dictionary, printed some years ago, shows the immense amount of labour which will remain to be done by Professor Wright and his staff of assistants when the necessary material in the shape of slips has been collected. In the first place, the article on each word will begin with a sort of geographical summary, from which may be learned the exact region in which it occurs, and, if necessary, those regions in which, contrary to what might be expected, it is not to be found. Then will follow an account of the divers shades of meaning with which the word is used in various localities, and of its varying forms. Examples will be quoted, and in all cases the authority for a meaning will be given. This is necessary, for, according to Professor Wright, there have been enthusiastic collectors of words who have been willing to pay so handsomely for additions to their glossaries that they have fallen victims to swindlers, and printed in their collections words for which there is no other authority whatever. There was once, for instance, a schoolmaster who gave his pupils sixpence for every new dialect word they brought him. His collection is one of the utmost value; but there are certain words included in it which manifestly owe their existence to the inventiveness of the collector's pupils, stimulated by the desire for sixpences. . . .

'The makers of the Dialect Dictionary have been driven by the very nature of their task to go forth into the remotest byways of literature, and frequently to find their chiefest treasures in books which would be wholly valueless and void of interest if they were not done in dialect. . . . And for the sake of those who may be able to render assistance it may be well to give the editor's explanation of why it is necessary to cut up glossaries and slip them. For this is work which can be done even by those who are ignorant of all dialects, and yet its value as assistance to the makers of the dictionary can hardly be over-estimated. The reason, then, is simply that the editor,



when he has taken in hand some one word, cannot be expected to turn to a hundred different glossaries and word-lists, and, keeping in view all these various pieces of information, digest them into a single homogeneous article. With regard to any word, he has to inform himself of its local *habitat*, its various forms and pronunciations, and its different shades of meaning. If this is to be accomplished without an amount of labour which would postpone the completion of the dictionary to the end of time, the whole amount of available information must be placed before him in one synoptic view. . . . It only remains to add that Professor Wright will be happy to supply information to those who are willing to help in any way whatever, and that his address is 6, Norham Road, Oxford.'

As an aid to accuracy in collecting material, Joseph Wright compiled and circulated a *Phonetic Alphabet to be used by workers for the English Dialect Dictionary*, with the following foreword:

'For the purposes of the Dictionary it is very important that in noting down dialect words, the worker should give the pronunciation as accurately as possible; that the word as written should represent as closely as possible the word as spoken. In order to attain this end the spelling must be strictly systematic and uniform; one symbol must always represent one and the same sound, and one sound must always be represented by one and the same symbol. In literary English one symbol may represent many sounds; for instance, the letter *o* represents many various sounds as may be seen from the following words: *fox, north, world, women, love, bosom, so, do*. And one sound is represented by many symbols, as may be seen in the following words: *feel, dream, he, thief, seize, machine, people*. What we have to aim at is a systematic spelling, according to which the letter *o* will always represent the same sound, and the vowel sound in *feel* will always be represented by the same symbol. We offer to our workers the following system of transliteration of sounds as a plain and practical means of attaining the end we have in view.'

At the end of the appeal for help a special paragraph contained advice about handwriting:

'Too much importance cannot be attached to *handwriting*, as affecting the value of results. In transcripts of ordinary book-English the context will generally determine what word is intended if its appearance is ambiguous, but with the arbitrary and outlandish spelling, in which some strange vocable is often presented, there is little or nothing to show what the word meant really is, if it is carelessly written. Many slips sent in will prove worthless for this reason. I would, therefore, earnestly commend EXTREME LEGIBILITY, combined with accuracy, as the cardinal virtue of a Dictionary worker.'

Through the kindness of Miss Skeat, I am able to give here three letters written by Joseph Wright, which contain references to meetings he had addressed in various places; and tell of his satisfaction in the success of his efforts to obtain workers.

6 Northam Road, Oxford. Nov. 14, 1894.

MY DEAR SKEAT,

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 9th which arrived just as I was leaving for the North. The meeting at Bradford was most successful. Including the Committee the number of workers for Yorkshire is now 62. The Committee has undertaken to supply me with all the material available for the county. I supplied them with a list of books already done and they will manage the rest. The meeting at Manchester was also very successful. The Committee consists of 25 people, and a large number of people have promised to co-operate with them. The Manchester people propose to include the whole of Cheshire, and I think I shall agree to this arrangement as my attempt to form Committees in the latter county was not very successful. Although the number of workers for Northumberland is already very large, I received the enclosed letter this morning—don't return it. It is really wonderful how warmly our fellow-countrymen have responded to the appeal for further help.

I am very sorry to hear that Mr. — has been so distressed

at my not having mentioned his name in the appeal. It wasn't possible to mention names, otherwise it would have been difficult to know where to stop. There is one point which Mr. — ought not to forget—and if necessary I shall make it *very very* clear to him—he was paid £300 for his trouble. And it is quite safe to say that people like Mr. Dartnell, Goddard, Provost, etc. have given us far more help than Mr. —.

I heard from — amongst others, with him it is quite out of the question. No scamps need apply!! I consider that Mr. Black has treated me in a most unbusinesslike fashion, for reasons stated in my last letter to you. If he should come to see me about the publication of the work now, I shall most certainly treat him according to his deserts. The question of the publication of the work will soon be solved. As soon as I am in possession of details I shall come to see you *at once*. But three things are highly probable:—

(1) The *workshop* will be at the C. Press.

(2) The work will be printed there.

(3) H. Frowde will be the publisher.

I shall be so glad when the whole thing is settled, because for the last two months, I have been working almost night and day. In fact since Term began it has often occurred that I could not go to bed at all.

Nov. 26, 1894.

I am sorry to say that the scheme of publishing the E.D.D. with Hart as printer and Frowde as publisher has fallen through, because the Delegates—i.e. some of them—of the Press object to this arrangement. Several of the Delegates were very strongly in favour of the scheme, but they were outvoted for reasons which I will explain to you shortly. I am not in the least discouraged at this result. Prof. Price and Mr. Gell are very disappointed at the decision of the Delegates. It may turn out for the best in the long run because arrangements have just been made for a deputation to wait upon Mr. John Murray next Thursday morning. It is strongly felt that if the great national importance of the work and its probable success from

a commercial point of view, are fully represented to him, there is much reason to suppose that he will be willing to undertake the publication of the work.

I now have a very large number of helpers in all parts of the country. I am to address meetings at Manchester on Dec. 7th and Newcastle-on-Tyne on the 8th. There is a Local Committee being formed at Bristol for Somerset, of which I shall be able to give you details later on.

A representative from the P.M. Gazette called to interview me the other day on the subject of the E.D.D. But before I would consent to give him any information upon the subject, I made him promise to leave out the personal element altogether and to *stick rigidly to the point*:—the E.D.D. He had prepared a lot of questions to ask me, but I told him that his questions were not to the point. The result is that he has written a rather good *article* on the E.D.D., the *proof* of which was sent to me on Sat. morning. So that it will appear very shortly.

There are several points upon which I should like to consult you. If I were to come to Cambridge on Friday afternoon could you put me up for the night? If this plan does not suit you, will you be free if I come over to Cambridge for the day on Saturday, I could arrive at 1.20? I will see Mr. Hart on Thursday evening to ascertain the result of the interview with Mr. John Murray.

Dec. 6, 1894.

I have just had John Murray's final decision about the publication of the E.D.D. He has declined to undertake the work. I shall now try one or two other *large* publishers and if these fail I propose to adopt the following plan of publication:—During the vacation I shall prepare an entirely new specimen—my material is much more complete now—I shall write three special circulars (1) for the Continent, (2) for America and the Colonies, (3) for Great Britain and Ireland. Mr. Frowde and Mr. Hart promise to give me all the help in their power. If I fail to obtain a publisher in the ordinary way, I propose to take Frowde as publisher and Hart as printer, and to bring out

the work by subscription. Subscribers shall receive 2 parts a year in return for £1. Each part to be issued at 15s. nett to non-subscribers.

I leave here on Friday morning for the meetings at Manchester, Newcastle, and *Hull* (a new Centre of workers) and shall be back, I hope, on Tuesday evening. I have an appointment with Mr. Rye in town on the Thursday or Friday about East Anglian words. In the following week I should very much like to see you.

Yours sincerely,  
J. WRIGHT.

The question of ways and means of publishing the E.D.D. was now uppermost in the mind of Joseph Wright. The Pitt Press had declined to undertake it as far back as 1890. An official letter from A. and C. Black, dated May 24, 1894, and a personal letter from one of the firm—John Black—dated September 11, 1894, both asking for further information as to financial responsibility, are couched in terms which imply ultimate refusal. Mr. Black writes: 'It is a subject in which I feel really interested, and of which I think I somewhat realize the importance; but I must say I hardly see how it is to be carried through unless some munificent patrons can be found to subsidise it as it deserves.' In November—as we have seen from the above letters to Professor Skeat—the Clarendon Press and John Murray declined to undertake the responsibility. By the end of the year 1894 'it was conclusively proved that no publisher would undertake the work; and the sole method that remained was for the Editor to publish it by subscription at his own pecuniary risk'.<sup>1</sup>

In the following notes Dr. Winternitz gives us a glimpse of what these years immediately preceding the appearance of the Dictionary meant to Joseph Wright: 'I remember well that it took a long time before he finally decided to undertake the huge work of editing the material that had been handed over to him

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the Memorial to Mr. Arthur Balfour, 1896.

by the English Dialect Society. If I am not mistaken, it was Professor Skeat and Dr. Furnivall who most urgently asked him to undertake the editing of this vast material. W. did not at all jump at the idea, especially when he had found that the material, vast as it was, was yet insufficient as a basis for the Dictionary. For a long time he weighed in his mind the pros and cons, which he discussed with me for days and days over and over again. He saw that it would involve an immense amount of drudgery work, and would mean resigning almost every other scholarly work for years. Besides, there was the great pecuniary risk, as it was found that no publisher would venture to publish the work. All this made him hesitate for a long time. And there were days when he said that he would *not* undertake the work. But at the same time, from a philological point of view, the work attracted him very much. It would be of lasting importance for the history of the English language. He knew also that there was no other man living who could do the work at all, and that there was the danger of the material collected by the English Dialect Society coming to nothing, and the still greater danger that, as the dialects were rapidly dying out, it would soon become impossible to complete the material and to accomplish the work at all, if it were not done then and by himself.

So he was more and more inclined towards taking the task upon himself. And when he had at last decided to do it, he threw himself into the work with unbounded enthusiasm. Now he began writing letters and sending out prospectuses by the thousand, and his wonderful power of organisation showed itself. Correspondents and co-operators were won in all parts of the country. And one day, I remember, he told me with great joy, that the Delegates of the Clarendon Press had given him rooms for a "Workshop". It was, I believe, in 1895, when the number of subscribers was thought sufficient, and the "Workshop" was founded with its staff of assistants. Henceforth nothing else existed for W. but the Dictionary. I do not think he ever read a newspaper in those days. He

worked hard for ever so many hours a day—in fact, I have never known a man going through so much hard mental work—but I believe he enjoyed it.'

In a letter to me (Sept. 15, 1896), Joseph Wright mentions two people who had just been in to see him, who wanted to talk about the financial future of the Dictionary. He writes: I had no wish or desire to discuss the question with them. They are not the proper channel to approach me, and when I am approached through the proper channel, it will be of no use. No one came to the rescue when I was almost in despair, and I won't give up the proprietorship now on any terms. I purchased it at a very high price, for it took a big slice out of my life; I can never be the same man I was two years ago.'

When—not very long ago—we were discussing this Biography, he dictated to me a few notes on this subject of the publication of the Dictionary: 'The Clarendon Press said they had as much as they could do with publishing the N.E.D. Bartholomew Price—one of the chief Delegates of the Press—as very much interested. He said he was sure there was money in it, but the others wouldn't listen to him. I wanted them to pay me £300 a year to do it, and they wouldn't. The Controller, Horace Hart, was always greatly interested in it, and he had hard to get a London publisher to take it, but he excused himself by saying they had never brought out anything by subscription, and didn't wish to begin. So that firm refused. Another publisher was tried, and after a time he was inclined to take it, but he wanted me to guarantee him against loss. I pondered this over in my mind, and came to the conclusion that he would stand to gain in any case, so I finally decided to do the publishing work myself. I sold direct to the general public at the full price, and allowed booksellers ten per cent. In publishing myself I saved an enormous lot per year.'<sup>1</sup> When

<sup>1</sup> In his speech at the opening of the Windhill Library (Jan. 6, 1906), referring to his having undertaken the task of publishing the E.D.D. himself, he said: 'It is not ten days' to a fortnight's hard work in the evenings as each part came out.'  
*Shipley Times and Express*, Jan. 12, 1906.

Part I of the Dictionary was issued, a 'note' at the foot of page 2 said: 'The English Dialect Dictionary is printed at the expense of Joseph Wright, M.A., of Langdale House, Park Town, Oxford.'

The Delegates of the Clarendon Press stated their views with no uncertain voice. Indeed, the heroism of Joseph Wright at this crisis in the history of the Dictionary never impressed me more than when I recently discovered, and read for the first time, these two letters—one from Mr. Frowde and the other from Mr. Lyttelton Gell (the Secretary to the Delegates):

*Oxford University Press Warehouse,  
Amen Corner. London, E.C.*

*May 31, 1895.*

DEAR PROFESSOR WRIGHT,

I am informed that the Delegates have not the slightest reason for objecting to the publication of the English Dialect Dictionary by me when it is produced. On the contrary they sympathise with the object, and consider that as I am the publisher to the English Dialect Society it is appropriate that the publication should be in my hands.

What the Delegates are determined to guard against is that either the Oxford Press or the London Warehouse should be identified with an undertaking which may break down in the middle. They do not think that you even now realise the immensity of the task which you have undertaken, nor the extent of time and the large resources which will be necessary to carry it through. They therefore object to any announcement that I will receive subscriptions, which might seem to commit the Press to some kind of guarantee in regard to the appearance of the work.

Whenever an instalment of the work appears, the Delegates would wish me to do my utmost to advance its circulation, but that is as far as they think it would be safe to go.

Yours very truly,  
HENRY FROWDE.



*The Clarendon Press, Oxford.*

*July 5th, 1895.*

DEAR DR. WRIGHT,

I sincerely trust that all the obstacles which have arisen to the publication of your English Dialect Dictionary have now been removed, and that the parts to be taken respectively by yourself and by our Managers in the production of the work are now clearly understood.

The Delegates however, are very anxious lest, under some unforeseen circumstances, the assistance thus given to your great undertaking, (and given I may say with great willingness and appreciation of your work)—should be thought by your subscribers to involve the Press in any liability. They therefore desire me to place formally on record that they will not be prepared to continue the work should you be yourself unable to proceed with it, and that they cannot authorise their Managers to receive subscriptions until the part subscribed for is ready for publication, nor to give their names in any way which might convey to the public the impression that they were responsible for the appearance of the parts at fixed intervals or for their completion.

The Delegates beg you to believe that this intimation is not due to any lack of sympathy with your 'magnum opus'. On the contrary they sincerely trust that it may proceed with unbroken success. But they have a very hard experience of the vast interval which separates the *materials* for a Dictionary from a finished product, and they are quite unable to commit themselves to any fresh responsibility in this direction.

I know that you are already perfectly aware of the views of the Delegates on this point, but they think it due to their successors, and possibly to yours, that the understanding should be thus placed on record, and beg that you will kindly intimate to them that you have received this letter and are prepared to proceed in accordance therewith.

Believe me,

yours very faithfully,

P. LYTTETON GELL.

Any ordinary man must surely have been daunted by such harsh and forbidding words, backed up as he knew them to be by the professional experience of a long-established business, and the resources of Oxford University. But Joseph Wright was not like other men. Squaring his broad shoulders to the task, he resolved that the publication of the English Dialect Dictionary should be begun, continued, and ended successfully by his own endeavour. Professor Percy Gardner, when speaking of him lately in this connexion, said: 'He had very hard times when first he came to Oxford, but it was no good putting difficulties in his way—he went through them.'

All arrangements were duly made for the printing of the Dictionary by the Clarendon Press, and Mr. Frowde did everything in his power to help in circulating appeals for subscribers. When Volume I of the Dialect Dictionary was completed, Joseph Wright in his Preface to it 'placed on record' his acceptance of the conditions laid upon him when the Press undertook to produce the work: 'To the Delegates of the University Press I owe my best thanks for their great kindness in providing me with a "Workshop" at a nominal rent; but the Delegates, while offering me every facility for the production of the work, have no responsibility, pecuniary or other, in connexion with it. The whole responsibility of financing and editing the Dictionary rests upon myself.'

The article which I have already quoted from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of December 6, 1894—based on information directly supplied by Joseph Wright—contained this announcement: 'Early in the New Year Dr. Wright will issue to the public a final specimen page of the Dictionary, and along with it an appeal for subscribers. These will pay a pound a year, and in return will receive, on July 1 and January 1, two parts per annum, the parts being issued at 15/- net to non-subscribers. Professor Wright promises that if a thousand names are obtained in response to this appeal he will immediately set about the work of producing the Dictionary, and thereafter send out the parts on the appointed days as regularly as if they were but

newspapers, magazines, or income-tax papers.' This, then, was his plan of campaign. Mr. Mayhew, writing to Professor Skeat on December 26, 1894, said: 'Perhaps this [coming] year may see the beginning of the E.D.D. Dr. Wright is now about to make his final effort to start the work by getting 1000 subscribers. Frowde will act as his agent, but Dr. W. will be the responsible publisher. I suppose by April we shall know whether the work is to be begun or finally abandoned.'

First of all he wrote—in February 1895—to a number of distinguished persons, asking for their support in 'this great national undertaking'. He received prompt and cordial replies, and was soon able to print a 'Preliminary List of Patrons', seventy-two in number, including: the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; the Duke of Argyll; the Marquis of Ripon; Earl Percy; the Bishops of London, Durham, Carlisle, Ely, Hereford, Oxford, Ripon, Worcester; Professors A. C. Bradley, Dowden, Herford, W. P. Ker, Max Müller, Napier, Sievers of Leipzig, Storm of Christiania, Zupitza of Berlin; Sir Redvers Buller; the Rt. Hon. J. Chamberlain, M.P.; Dr. Paget, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford; the Principal of Jesus College, Oxford; the President of Magdalen College, Oxford; and the Rev. J. R. Magrath, Provost of Queen's, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Many added a few words of kindly encouragement. Bishop Stubbs wrote: 'I very much sympathize with you in your design for the dialect Dictionary, and you are quite welcome to quote me as a friend to the undertaking'; and Professor Ker: 'It will give me the greatest pleasure to accept the honour you kindly propose for my name in the Prospectus of your Dictionary. If I can help the project in any other way I trust you will let me know.'

In March 1895 he wrote a new Prospectus and prepared specimen pages of the Dictionary. In compiling the articles for these specimen pages, the Controller of the Press, Mr. Horace Hart, gave him some very valuable advice with regard to technique. Mr. Hart devised a plan whereby it was possible to print the abbreviated titles of as many as ten glossaries—

**ADDLE**, *v.* In all the northern counties to *n.* Ches., Notts., Staff., Leic., Linc., Nhamp., Rut., *e.* Anglia; not in Sc. Not in gloss. of *s.* Ches. and Shr. Also written **adle** *N.Cy.* RAY, Linc. SKINNER; **aadle** Suff. MOOR; **eddle** *N.Cy.* BROCKETT, Nhumb. HESLOP, Cumb. GIBSON, Yks. WILLAN; **yeddle** *n.* Ches. WILBRAHAM; **aidle** Nhumb. HESLOP, Linc. BROGDEN, *e.* Anglia, FORBY; **aydle** *c.* and **ettle** *n.* Cumb. DICKINSON.

Pron. *adl*—Besides *adl* there occur also *edl* in Nhumb., Cumb., *ēdl* in Nhumb., *c.* Cumb., Linc., *e.* Anglia; *ettle* *n.* Cumb., and *yedl* in *n.* Ches.

1. To earn, acquire by one's labour.

*N.Cy.* RAY *Collection of N.Cy. Words* (1691); HUTTON *Tour to the Caves* (1781); BROCKETT *Gloss.* (1846). Nhumb. He addles three hap'ence a week, That's nobbut a fardin' a day (Song, 'Ma Laddie'), HESLOP *Gloss.* (1892). Dur. *Teesdale Gloss.* (1849). Cumb. I's gān to eddle me five shillin' middlin' cannily, GIBSON *Folk-speech of Cumb.* (1869) p. 2; FERGUSON *Gloss.* (1873); *c.* aydle, *s. w.* addle, *n.* ettle, DICKINSON *Gloss.* (1878). *s. Westm.* Ye dunnet addle as mickle-ta day, HUTTON *Storth and Arnside Dialogues* (1760) l. 29. Yks. *n.* Sha's t'aud (too old) te addle better waage, MUNBY *Verses New and Old* (1868) p. 70; Ah's nowght bud what Ah addles, ATKINSON *Cleveland Gloss.* (1868); HARLAND *Swaledale Gloss.* (1873); F. K. ROBINSON *Whitby Gloss.* (1876); *e.* He cannot addle his bread, MARSHALL *Rural Economy* (1788) EDS. (1873); Ah haint addled saut (salt) ti my taty this mornin, ROSS, STEAD, *HOLDERNESSE Holderness Gloss.* (1877); *n.* and *e.* He addles a good wage, MORRIS *Yks. Folk-Talk* (1892); *mid.* When he'd addled his shun (shoes), BLACKAH *Songs and Poems* (1867) p. 13 [said of a horse when it falls upon its back and rolls from one side to the other. When a horse does this in Hants. and Suss., it is said to earn a gallon of oats, HOLLOWAY *Gloss.* (1839)]; C. C. ROBINSON *Gloss.* (1876); *w.* We gun teugh an addle summat, CARR *Craven Dial.* (1828) ii. p. 289; It isn't what a chap addles, it's what a chap saves at makes him rich, HARTLEY *Yks. Budget* (1868) p. 48; eddie (pron. addle), WILLAN *Archaeologia* (1811) vol. xvii. p. 145; HUNTER *Hallamshire Gloss.* (1829); BANKS *Wakefield Gloss.* (1865); EASTER *Huddersfield Gloss.* (1883); ADDY *Sheffield Gloss.* (1888). Lanc. He addled about eight shillin' a week, WAUGH *Home Life Lanc. Factory Folk* (1867) p. 102; NODAL and MILNER *Gloss.* (1875); He says he's addled fifty pund, HARLAND *Lyrics* (1866) p. 76; I'm like the little donkeys i' the lane, I canna addle nought, *Stone edge* (1868) ch. x. p. 134; *n.* MORRIS *Furness Gloss.* (1869); S. COLLIER *Tim Bobbin* (edit. 1811) p. 62. Ches. WILBRAHAM *Gloss.* (1820); LEIGH *Gloss.* (1877); HOLLAND *Gloss.* (1886). Derb. PEGGE *Derbassms* (†1796) EDS. (1894). Notts. MUSTERS *MSS. Gloss.* Linc. SKINNER *Etymologicon* (1671); I have aided my week's wages, BROGDEN *Gloss.* (1866); Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle her bread, TENNYSON *Northern Farmer, New Style* (1870) st. 7; *n.* Tom Stocks can addle fower shillin' a daay at suffin', PEACOCK *Gloss.* (1889); *s. w.* COLE *Gloss.* (1886). Staff. POOLE *Gloss.* (1880). Leic. Oi ha' addled my weeje, EVANS *Gloss.* (1881). Nhamp. STERNBERG *Dial. and Folklore* (1851); BAKER *Gloss.* (1854). Rut. WORDSWORTH *Gloss.* (1891). *e.* Anglia. FORBY *Gloss.* (1830).

2. To save a portion of one's earnings.

Yks. My father had addled a vast in trade, And I were his son and heir, INGLEDEW *The Ballads and Songs of Yks.* (1860) p. 259; *n.* and *e.* He's addled a deal o' brass, MORRIS *Yks. Folk-Talk* (1892). *n.* Linc. SUTTON *Gloss.* (1881). *e.* Anglia. I have at last addled up a little money, FORBY *Gloss.* (1830).

3. Of crops, trees, &c., to grow, to thrive.

*n.* Ches. *Gloss.* of WILBRAHAM (1820); LEIGH (1877); HOLLAND (1886). *e.* Anglia. That crop addles, FORBY *Gloss.* (1830); MOOR *Suff. Words* (1823); Where luie imbraceth the tree verie sore, kill luie, or else tree wil addle no more, TUSSEER (an Essex man) *Husbandrie* (1580) EDS. (1878) p. 111.

[From ON. *ōdla*, refl. *ōdlask*, to acquire (for oneself) property, from *ōdal*, property. Found in ORMIN (c. 1205) as *addlenn*; Townl. *Myst.* (c. 1450) *adylle*; Cath. *Angl.* (1483) *adylle*; LEVINS (1570) *to addil*, demerere; *to addle*, lucrari. Like many words of Norse origin, it appears never to have





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Pron. *adl*—Besides *adl* there occur also *edl* in Nhumb. Cumb., *ēdl* in Nhumb. c.Cumb.<sup>b</sup> Linc. e.Anglia; *ettle* n.Cumb., and *yedl* in n.Ches.

1. To earn, acquire by one's labour.

N.Cy.<sup>a</sup><sup>b</sup>; HUTTON *Tour to the Caves* (1781). Nhb.<sup>a</sup> Headdles three ha'pence a week, That's nobbut a fardin' a day (Song, 'Ma Laddie'). Dur.<sup>a</sup> Cum.<sup>a</sup> c. *aydle*, s.w. *addle*, n. *ettle*. Cum.<sup>a</sup> 't's gān to *edde* me five shillin', middlin' cannily. Wm. Cum.<sup>a</sup> Ye dunnet *adde* as mic'le ta day, HUTTON *Storth and Arnside Dialogues* (1760) l. 29. n.Yks. Sha's t'aud (too old) te *adde* better waage, MUNBY *Verses New and Old* (1865) p. 70; n.Yks.<sup>a</sup> Ah's nowgt bud what Ah *addles*; n.Yks.<sup>a</sup><sup>b</sup> e.Yks.<sup>a</sup> He cannot *adde* his bread, MARSHALL *Rural Economy* (1788). e.Yks.<sup>a</sup> Ah haint *addled* saut (salt) tī my tafy this morning. ne.Yks.<sup>a</sup> He *addles* a good wage. m.Yks.<sup>a</sup> When he'd *addled* his shun (shoes), BLACKAH *Songs and Poems* (1867) p. 13 [said of a horse when it falls upon its back and rolls from one side to the other. When a horse does this in Hmp. and Suss., it is said to earn a gallon of oats, HOLLOWAY (1839)]. w.Yks. It isn't what a chap *addles*, it's what a chap saves 'at makes him rich, HARTLEY Yks. *Budget* (1868) p. 43; *edde* (pron. *addle*), WILLAN *Archaeologia* (1811) vol. xvii. p. 145. w.Yks.<sup>a</sup> We mun teugh an *adde* summat; w.Yks.<sup>b</sup>ed Lan.<sup>a</sup> He *addled* about eight shillin' a week, WAUGH *Home Life Lanc. Factory Folk* (1867) p. 102; He says he's *addled* fifty pund, HARLAND *Lyrics* (1866) p. 76; I'm like the little donkeys i' the lane, I canna *adde* nought, *Stone Edge* (1868) ch. x. p. 134. Lanc.<sup>a</sup> n.Lanc.<sup>a</sup> Ches.<sup>a</sup><sup>b</sup> c. Derb.<sup>a</sup> Linc. Mun be a guvness, lad, or summat, and *adde* her bread, TENNYSON *Northern Farmer*, New Style (1870) st. 7; SKINNER (1671). Linc.<sup>a</sup> n.Linc.<sup>a</sup> Tom Stocks can *adde* fower shillin' a daay at suffin.' sw.Linc.<sup>a</sup> Staff.<sup>a</sup> Leic.<sup>a</sup> Oi ha' *addled* my weeje. Nhamp.<sup>a</sup><sup>b</sup> Rut.<sup>a</sup> e.Ang.

← I don't  
Celle Kils  
juxtaposition  
of 2b  
e.Yks.<sup>a</sup>  
H.H.

## SECOND SPECIMEN

The plan of superior letters for references was devised  
by Horace Hart to economize space



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N.Cy.<sup>1</sup>; **HUTTON** *Tour to the Caves* (1781). Nhb.<sup>1</sup> He addles three ha'pence a week, That's nobbut a fardin' a day (Song, 'Ma Laddie'). Dur.<sup>1</sup> Cum.<sup>1</sup> c. aydle, *s.w.* addle, *n.* ettle. Cum.<sup>1</sup> I's gan to eddle me five shillin' middlin' cannily. Wm. Cum.<sup>1</sup> Ye dunnet addle as mickle ta day, **HUTTON** *Storch and Arnside Dialogues* (1760) l. 29. n.Yks. Sha's t'aud (too old) te addle better waage, **MUNBY** *Verses New and Old* (1863) p. 70; n.Yks.<sup>1</sup> Ah's nowght bud wha? Ah addles; n.Yks.<sup>2</sup> e.Yks.<sup>1</sup> He cannot addle his bread, **MARSHALL** *Rural Economy* (1788). e.Yks.<sup>1</sup> Ah haint addled saut (salt) ti my taty this morning. ne.Yks.<sup>1</sup> He addles a good wage. m.Yks.<sup>1</sup> When he'd addled his shun (shoes), **BLACKAH** *Songs and Poems* (1867) p. 13 [said of a horse when it falls upon its back and rolls from one side to the other. When a horse does this in Hmp. and Suss., it is said to earn a gallon of oats, **HOLLOWAY** (1839)]. w.Yks. It isn't what a chap addles, it's what a chap saves 'at makes him rich, **HARTLEY** *Yks. Budget* (1860) p. 43; eddle (pron. addle), **WILLAN** *Archæologia* (1811) vol. xvii. p. 145. w.Yks.<sup>1</sup> We mun teugh an addle summat; w.Yks.<sup>2</sup> Lan.<sup>1</sup> He addled about eight shillin' a week, **WAUGH** *Home Life Lanc. Factory Folk* (1867) p. 102; He says he's addled fifty pund, **HARLAND** *Lyrics* (1866) p. 76; I'm like the little donkeys i' the lane, I canna addle nought, **Stone Edge** (1868) ch. x. p. 134. Lanc.<sup>1</sup>, n.Lanc.<sup>1</sup>, Ches.<sup>1,2,3</sup>. **Derb.**<sup>1</sup> Linc. Mun be a guvness, lad, or summat, and addle her bread, **TENNYSON** *Northern Farmer, New Style* (1870) st. 7; **SKINNER** (1671). Linc.<sup>1</sup>, n.Linc.<sup>1</sup> Tom Stocks can addle fower shillin' a daay at suffin. sw.Linc.<sup>1</sup>, Staff.<sup>1</sup>, Leic.<sup>1</sup> Oi ha' addled my wee. Nhamp.<sup>1,2</sup>, Rut.<sup>1</sup>, e.Ang.

2. To save a portion of one's earnings.

Yks. My father had addled a vast in trade, And I were his son and heir. **INGLEDEW** *The Ballads and Songs of Yks.* (1860) p. 259. ne.Yks.<sup>1</sup> He's addled a deal o' brass. n.Linc. **SUTTON** (1800). e.Ang.<sup>1</sup> I have at last addled up a little money.

3. Of crops, trees, &c., to grow, to thrive.

Ches.<sup>1,2,3</sup>, e.Ang.<sup>1</sup> That crop addles. Suff.<sup>1</sup>, Ess. Where Iuie imbraceth the tree verie sore, kill Iuie, or else tree will addle no more, **TUSSER** *Husbandrie* (1580) EDS. (1878) p. 111.

• [From ON. *ōðla*, refl. *ōðlask*, to acquire (for oneself) property, from *ōðal*, property. Found in **ORMIN** (c. 1205) as *addlenn*; **Townl. Myst.** (c. 1450) *adylle*; **Cath. Angl.** (1483) *adylle*; **LEVINS** (1570) *to addil*, *demerere*; *to addle*, *lucrari*. Like many words of Norse origin, it appears never to have passed north into Scotland.]

**MENSE**, *sb.* In Sc., and all the northern counties (Nhumb., Dur., Cumb., Westm., Yks., n.Lanc.) to n.Linc. Rarely spelt **mence**, **ments** (see below). Pron. **mens**.

1. Decency, decorum; discretion; propriety of conduct or manners.

Sc. Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense, Just much about it wi' your scanty sense, **BURNS** (1800) vol. iii. p. 54. N.Cy.<sup>1</sup>

### THIRD SPECIMEN

The top portion exhibits the device of superior numbers which was adopted

C(f)  
XVII

unaltered  
from this  
point.  
ff





quoted as authorities for the use of a dialect word in various districts—in a single line of the Dictionary. For example: Nhp.<sup>1</sup> means—Baker *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases* (1854); s. War.<sup>1</sup> means—Francis *South Warwickshire Words* (1876); and so on for perhaps a hundred or more books. By adopting this system of recognized abbreviations Joseph Wright calculated that he saved space amounting—on the whole work—to about a volume and a half! It is curious to find that Mr. Gladstone did not altogether approve of the plan. In his letter enclosing his subscription to the Dictionary he said: 'It occurred to me to ask myself whether the principle of abbreviation may not have been carried rather far in the specimen sent.'

Two letters written by Joseph Wright to Professor Holt-hausen about this time, tell of these preparations for finding 'the necessary number of subscribers':

#### ENGLISH DIALECT SOCIETY

*Honorary Secretary.* PROF. J. WRIGHT, M.A.  
6 Norham Road, Oxford.

Feb. 19, 1896.

... I was very pleased to hear of your 'call' to Gothenburg. You acted most wisely in accepting the post. Germany is overstocked with scholars, and it is becoming every year more and more difficult to make a decent career there. Please write some time and tell me how you are getting on with your work etc.

For some time I have been spending all my spare time in arranging the material which has been collected for the Great dictionary of English Dialects. I am sending you by bookpost a Circular containing some account of the work. Since I issued it in the middle of last year the material has grown enormously. There are at present over 600 helpers for the Dictionary in the various parts of the country. The material in my possession (2 bedrooms full) must be at least a million and a quarter of slips, each made according to the directions given on p. 4 of the Circular. The day has now come when it is highly important to begin to prepare this vast amount of material for Press.

And with this end in view I have just prepared a few miscellaneous specimen articles to give people an idea of the plan and scope of the work. The Dict. will be printed at the Clarendon Press and brought out by annual subscription with Henry Frowde as publisher.

Subscribers will pay a guinea a year in return for which they will receive two half-yearly parts, each published at 15/- net to non-subscribers. I shall be very thankful indeed if you can persuade your University Librarian to subscribe to the work.

With kind regards,

believe me, yours ever,

J. WRIGHT.

[Postcard.]

6 *Norham Road, Oxford. April 2, 1895.*

Many thanks for your very kind post-card. Yes, the Dial. Dict. will be a great work and as it can only be done once on so comprehensive a scale, it is most important that it should be done well. The Prospectus has just been printed and I am sending you a copy by this post. I shall be very thankful if you can get your Stadtbibliothek to subscribe. It will require a gigantic effort to get the necessary number of subscribers. Can you help us in Sweden?

With kindest regards to all *three* of you,

yours sincerely,

J. WRIGHT.

'Between April and September, he sent out 50,000 prospectuses and wrote nearly 3,000 letters to such persons as would be likely to become subscribers.'<sup>1</sup> These are the figures recorded in the Memorial drawn up in 1896 for presentation to the First Lord of the Treasury. It must indeed have proved to be 'a gigantic effort'. All this, moreover, was in addition to his work as Hon. Secretary to the Dialect Society, which meant having to deal with a mass of correspondence: letters from voluntary workers asking for books in some specified dialect; letters from

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the Memorial to Mr. Arthur Balfour, 1896.

To be issued by Subscription (*Parts I and II during 1896;  
other Parts to follow at intervals of Six Months*).

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The  
English Dialect Dictionary,

BEING

The Complete Vocabulary of all Dialect Words still in use or  
known to have been in use during the last  
Two Hundred Years;

founded mainly on the Publications of the English Dialect Society  
and a large amount of material never before printed.

EDITED BY

JOSEPH WRIGHT, M.A., PH.D.,

DEPUTY PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
(HON. SECRETARY AND LITERARY DIRECTOR OF THE ENGLISH DIALECT SOCIETY).

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Mode of Publication.

THE Dictionary will be brought out by *annual* Subscription. Subscribers will pay *a guinea* a year, in return for which they will receive two half-yearly parts, each published at fifteen shillings *net* to non-subscribers. Part I will be published in June, 1896, and the subsequent parts at intervals of six months, until the whole work is completed. Each part will consist of at least 144 pages of the same paper, size, and type as the specimen pages sent herewith. The total number of copies printed will depend upon the *original* number of subscribers.

There will also be a special edition, strictly limited to 250 copies, printed on Whatman's hand-made paper; each part will be numbered and signed. For this edition the annual subscription will be two guineas.



people who wanted to help, but could not understand the printed instructions; from people who suggested names of others whom the Editor might rope in as helpers; from Secretaries asking if and when he would come and address meetings; letters, in short, from anybody who had read in a local newspaper that: 'Those who can give a little help in this work should communicate with Professor Joseph Wright, 6 Norham Road, Oxford, by whom the smallest linguistic contributions will be thankfully received.' He had set himself the task of doubling within two or three years the materials which the English Dialect Society had taken twenty years to accumulate, therefore, far from neglecting helpers, many more must be harnessed into the scheme. Enough of all this correspondence still remains stacked in drawers and cupboards to tell something of the strain it alone must have been in its day. It was not till after the 'Workshop' had been established that Joseph Wright had any sort of secretarial assistance. And on the top of everything there was his University teaching and lecturing to be carried on during term. One can well understand that he could say—as in his letter to Professor Skeat—'It has often happened that I could not go to bed at all'.

For seven weeks in the spring of 1895 Professor Skeat was seriously ill with pneumonia. Dr. Murray, in a letter to Mrs. Skeat (dated April 1, 1895), wrote: 'I had great difficulty in dissuading Professor Wright from starting at once for Cambridge; but I pointed out to him that he could do nothing but trouble you, and that no doubt Professor Skeat must be kept quite quiet, and see no one for some time.' When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to take an interest in the progress of the Dictionary, Joseph Wright sent him news through Mrs. Skeat:

*6 Norham Road. Oxford. April 30, 1895.*

DEAR MRS. SKEAT,

Just one line for the dear Professor! kindly tell him that we have now 280 subscribers for the Dictionary. Very few Libraries as yet, which is a good sign, as we shall easily get them. Mr.

Frowde and Mr. Hart think that the result up to the present is 'most excellent'.

I do hope *he* is a little better to-day.

May 16, 1895.

Thank you very much for the glad tidings contained in your letter. We are all so pleased to hear that the Professor has really got a turn for the better. It is the most pleasant bit of news I have had for a long time. How you too must rejoice!

Kindly tell him not to think about 'any serious work', but to think about getting better. We must not trouble him with details about the Dictionary just yet, but he will be pleased to learn that I have written to the Headmasters of *all* our large Public Schools asking them to subscribe to the work for their School Library, and the result has been wonderful. *Nearly all* of them have become subscribers. The Americans too are now beginning to come in by every mail. We should easily reach the number of 500 by the end of next week!!

June 6, 1895.

Many thanks for the subscription forms and your kind note. At the Professor's request I am sending him a few copies of the prospectus etc.

I am so pleased to hear that you and the Professor may soon go away for a good change. You too must be sorely in need of a complete change. Yes, be very strict with him. Don't let him work for a long time to come. As soon as he is well enough I have many things to tell him about the Dictionary, but I will not send him details of these matters until he is quite strong.

Kindly tell him however that the number of subscribers is just a little *over 600*!! That will please him I know.

With kindest regards to all of you,  
yours sincerely,

J. WRIGHT.

P.S. There is just another little item will please him: I wrote *direct* to the Queen the other day, asking her to become a

*To be issued by Subscription (Parts I and II during 1896;  
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## Mode of Publication.

THE Dictionary will be brought out by *annual* Subscription. Subscribers will pay \$7.50\* a year, in return for which they will receive two half-yearly parts, each published at \$5.25 *net* to non-subscribers. Part I will be published in June, 1896, and the subsequent parts at intervals of six months, until the whole work is completed. Each part will consist of at least 144 pages of the same paper, size, and type as the specimen pages sent herewith. The total number of copies printed will depend upon the *original* number of subscribers.

There will also be a special edition, strictly limited to 250 copies, printed on Whatman's hand-made paper; each part will be numbered and signed. For this edition the annual subscription will be \$15.0\*.



\* American Institutions entitled to receive imported works free of duty will secure a proportionate reduction in price.

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NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.





subscriber. The subscription form came back duly filled up!!!  
Vivat Regina!

\*An extract from a letter written by Mr. Mayhew to Professor Skeat will serve as evidence that these expressions of hopefulness were not only words of bedside cheer, but statements of actual fact:

*May 18, 1895.*

... We are hoping in Oxford that you will be feeling strong enough towards the end of June to visit our University during this year's Encænna. Wright expects by that time to have got 600 subscribers to the E.D.D., and he will be beginning to set to work on it—at least so far as to get ready the slips. He is quite sure of ultimate success. He has succeeded already beyond his most sanguine expectations. . . .

On June 12, 1895, Professor Skeat wrote to Mr. Mayhew saying that he was 'now much better', and that he had 'reopened an account for the English Dialect Dictionary'. That 'Fund', as we have seen, had practically died out in 1890, but now the new Prospectus included a subscription form asking subscribers to send their cheques to Professor Skeat at Cambridge. He acted as Treasurer for the Dictionary at the beginning, but gave it up after the first two Parts had been issued. On June 30 he wrote to the Editor, acknowledging the receipt of certain cheques: 'You will certainly get your 1000 subscribers, and more: probably 1200. So do not trouble. . . . I am glad you will so soon be able to make a beginning.

'I hear from Mayhew that you have not been very well. I hope you will get real good out of your holiday: after which you will certainly have to adopt my regular habits, as a Dictionary cannot be produced in any other way.'

From a letter written by Mr. Oliver Heslop earlier in the month, I gather that the extra strain he had latterly undergone had had some passing effect on Joseph Wright's normally robust health:

*Corbridge, R.S.O. Northumberland. June 14, 1895.*

DEAR PROFESSOR WRIGHT,

Your most welcome letter only confirmed the apprehensions which my wife and I had of your indisposition. We are both sincerely sorry to learn that you have suffered so severely from your heroic exertion. When I told my wife she said 'I don't know how he has done it—what a brave man!' My pleasure in hearing from you was only lessened by the feeling that I had added one more to the heavy tale of your task in letter writing. You should have sent me just one word on a post-card. . . .

I can well understand that you cannot proceed without a minimum number of 1000. . . . In the case of the Dialect Dictionary the cost of setting in so many founts will bring up the printing to a much higher proportionate figure than the plain work of such a work as our History [of Northumberland], so that there will be no margin in your proposal as it stands. No doubt each week now will add to your list of Subscribers. . . . But, alas, that you should be undergoing all this drudgery before you can secure leisure for the great work of the task itself! And yet I am persuaded that you are on the threshold of the entering in to take possession. You will surely succeed, else you would have been daunted before this. It is very splendid, and I pray you to continue in brave heart, but for the work's sake and for your own sake to abate somewhat your excess of exertion. I hope you will forgive my expression of concern and most sincere regard and believe me

ever yours,

R. OLIVER HESLOP.

In 1896, when Mr. Heslop wrote to congratulate me on my engagement, he said: 'When Dr. Wright visited his Northumberland committee he stayed here, and won all hearts by his gracious and kindly ways. Ever since that time his name has been a household word, and our young folks are never tired of recalling the pleasure caused by his visit.'

The names and addresses of the subscribers were duly

registered by Joseph Wright in alphabetical lists, which he afterwards had printed in address-books specially designed for his purpose. He preserved all the original forms—also alphabetically arranged—filled in and signed by the subscribers, and any letters accompanying these forms. Many who responded to the appeal asked for extra copies of the Prospectus, and volunteered to get additional names. One devoted friend wrote: 'I have just got you a new subscriber in the person of my dentist'; another offered to canvass all the local Libraries in the town where he lived. Others wrote just a few words of praise and encouragement. Dr. Thomas Hodgkin said: 'The increasing pressure of book-population on book-shelf-room has almost made me decide not to buy another book that I can do without, but I feel the force of your appeal on behalf of the Dialect Dictionary, & therefore enclose subscription form with my signature.' S. R. Crockett wrote: 'I think the undertaking upon which you have embarked is indeed a great and worthy one. Kindly add my name to the list of subscribers.' It is pleasant to know that he was not disappointed in 'the undertaking' he thus welcomed. In a later letter (Nov. 15, 1899) he said: 'I shall welcome the end of the new volume with great enthusiasm. You have no more careful or admiring & appreciative reader. I have not much spare time, but for weeks after a new part comes out I read little else.' Foreign colleagues wrote of their success in enrolling Public and University Libraries; and American Professors joined in the good cause. One of these last wrote: 'I admire, am astounded at, the courage with which you face a million slips. You would have confronted Xerxes calmly.' Besides all the host of letters of this kind, the Editor also stored up those from non-subscribers, who made excuses such as: 'The Dialect Dictionary is evidently a work of very great interest and value. I must ask you, however, to excuse me if I do not become a subscriber, as I fear I should not have time to make use of your Dictionary' (this from a bishop). 'It is estimated that the Dictionary will be completed in about 8 years. Now 8 years is a long time to

which to look forward. I am getting on in life. Shall I live 8 years?'. 'I limit my subscriptions and purchases to complete works'. 'I simply cannot afford to buy costly books, for I have a son to keep at Oxford'. Amongst the non-subscribers who wrote to excuse themselves was Andrew Lang:

DEAR SIR, *1 Marloes Road. Kensington W. March 5 [1895].*

I fear I have no desire to be one of the subscribers to a Dialect Dictionary. I have really no room for the books I *do* need, and I always lose all books that come out in parts. Moreover English dialects are of a wonderful hideousness, and one sees only too much of them in novels. For these reasons I am not anxious to be connected in any way with a work on Dialects.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

A. LANG.

Of course if my mere *name* is of any use, the makers of the Dictionary are welcome to it, but I am obliged to give up taking books that come out in parts, and Dialect (in which I do not include the Scottish language) is a subject which rather repels than attracts me.

In June 1895, when the number of subscribers had mounted to 750, Joseph Wright thought this would warrant him in making arrangements to start the actual work of preparation for the press. All the slips, the books yet to be read by helpers, the dictionaries and other books of reference which had been bought as 'tools' were transferred from No. 6 Norham Road to the 'Workshop' at the Clarendon Press. He has told me that the dictionaries alone cost something like £600; and the number of dialect novels was not to be counted! He had bought whole sets of the classic authors such as Hardy, George Eliot, the Brontës, Blackmore, Stevenson, Scott, Barrie, Crockett, Galt, &c., and scores of others, good, bad, and indifferent, anything which contained even a smattering of dialect here and there.

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 E. B. TYLOR, M.A., D.C.L., Keeper of the Museum, Oxford.  
 Prof. C. R. UNGER, Ph.D., Christiania.  
 T. FISHER UNWIN, Esq., London, E.C.  
 Prof. H. VARNHAGEN, Ph.D., Erlangen.  
 A. W. WARD, Litt.D., Principal of Owens Coll.  
 T. H. WARREN, M.A., President of Magdalen Coll., Oxford.  
 Prof. J. WESTLAKE, Q.C., LL.D., Cambridge.  
 Sir JOHN WILLIAMS, Bart., M.D., London, W.  
 Sir R. H. WILLIAMS-BULKELEY, Bart., Beaumaris.  
 W. ALDIS WRIGHT, Litt.D., Vice-Master of Trinity Coll., Cambridge.  
 Prof. J. ZUPITZA, Ph.D., Litt.D., Berlin.

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Prof. JAMES W. BRIGHT, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.  
 Prof. E. M. BROWN, University of Cincinnati, Ohio.  
 Prof. J. D. BRUCE, Ph.D., Bryn Mawr College, Penn.  
 Prof. FRANCIS J. CHILD, Ph.D., LL.D., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.  
 Prof. H. COLLITZ, Ph.D., Bryn Mawr College, Penn.  
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 The Hon. CHARLES S. FAIRCHILD, LL.D., Ex-Secretary of the United States Treasury, New York City.  
 Prof. E. FLÜGEL, Ph.D., Stanford University, Calif.  
 Professor BASIL L. GILDERLEEVE, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.  
 The Hon. WILLIAM T. HARRIS, LL.D., United States Commissioner of Education, Washington, D.C.  
 Prof. JAMES MORGAN HART, J.U.D., Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

Prof. GEORGE HEMPL, Ph.D., Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.  
 The Hon. GEORGE F. HOAR, LL.D., United States Senator for Massachusetts.  
 Prof. GEORGE L. KITTREDGE, A.B., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.  
 Prof. THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY, LL.D., Yale University, New Haven, Conn.  
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 Prof. BENJ. DE WHEELER, Ph.D., Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.  
 Prof. HENRY WOOD, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore, Md.



For the following account of the 'Workshop', and the beginnings of the editorial work on the great Dictionary, I am indebted mainly to Miss Partridge, the first of Joseph Wright's senior assistants. The notes he himself left me for this part of the Biography are very few, but I give them as they stand, dictated to me quite simply with no attempt to glorify his heroic venture. They summarize much of what I have so far recorded: 'For months I used to write thirty letters at night, before I went to bed, asking people to subscribe. I always believed in a personal letter; a type-written or printed appeal would have been thrown straightway into the waste-paper basket. What helped the Dictionary at the start, almost more than anything, was that Skeat had just brought out his Chaucer, and Mr. Frowde supplied me with a list of the subscribers to this edition, and I got an enormous number of subscribers from this list. In one way or another I got over 750 together before the first Part was issued. The most important part of the business was a judicious selection of names. I used to get correspondents to send me names of likely people in their district. I also got lists of the members of learned Societies. Then there is nothing like *Whitaker's Almanak*! I have made more money out of that book than anybody could ever dream. The reason why I brought the Dictionary out by subscription was that it must come out in Parts. One of the most striking things about it was that it was never advertised—not a penny was ever spent on advertising the Dictionary. The newspaper press was very generous in writing little articles about it, as the Parts came out, and this helped to make it known.'

The 'Workshop' opened with one senior lady assistant and two unskilled juniors. Miss J. B. Partridge—the senior assistant—was engaged by Joseph Wright in June 1895. She had taken a B.A. Degree at London University in Mental and Moral Science in 1892, having studied for her Degree at University College, Aberystwyth. She was recommended by Professor C. H. Herford, at that time Professor of English Philology at Aberystwyth. She worked on the Dictionary



staff till the autumn of 1897. 'When I left', she says, 'we were three seniors and Mr. Mayhew (mornings only).' (Mr. Mayhew continued this part-time work till 1902, when he began to find it too arduous, and resigned.)

### MISS PARTRIDGE'S NOTES

At my first interview with the Editor—in June 1895—he said that he hoped I should undertake *the definitions*. But when we actually came to editing the material, the definitions were written by whoever was responsible for the whole word. So far as I can remember, Dr. Wright said nothing more in detail about my future work. I merely gathered that I might have to do anything that turned up.

Some time before the Workshop was started, the Editor had drawn up a kind of specimen page, so that would-be subscribers might have some idea of what they might expect to get. When the senior assistants began to edit the material, they had this specimen page as a kind of model, though of course it could not be slavishly followed. I think *Agate* was one of the words on it.

In the middle of July 1895, one senior, and two junior assistants were turned on to do the preliminary sorting. To begin with, the Workshop held nothing whatever beyond long bare deal tables, and long empty deal shelves. It really *was* like an empty workshop, not a scholar's den. The floor was strewn with packing-cases filled with the accumulated slips of twenty years—and the dust of twenty years! There were parcels of over a thousand slips, and parcels of a few dozen only; big Glossaries, MS. collections, extracts from dialect stories and poems, material got together by Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte or by Mr. Thomas Hallam (who tramped all round the Peak district for it), something of all sorts. There was confused higgledy-piggledy matter that had to be converted into usable slips. The work was quite easy, though hot, dirty, and monotonous; the Editor was not yet needed, so he just left us to it. Every post seemed to bring in more parcels; subscriptions too, were coming in fast. The packing-cases were gradually emptied, and their contents re-arranged on open shelves under the initial letters. It took six weeks to do this first sorting, but new material continued to pour in for the first six months or so, and at intervals afterwards, to be sorted by the junior assistants, and put on to shelves ready for use. The junior assistants sorted in this way: First, the whole of the material was sorted

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Treasurer: REV. A. L. MAYHEW, M.A., 18 Bradmore Road, Oxford.

Bankers: THE LONDON AND COUNTY BANK, High Street, Oxford.

Publisher: HENRY FROWDE, Oxford University Press, Amen Corner, London

July 5. 1895.

Dear Sir, I take the liberty of sending you by this post the prospectus of the English Dialect Dictionary in the hope that you will kindly allow us to put down your name as a subscriber to this great national work. It will require an enormous effort to procure the number of subscribers necessary to enable us to begin the publication of the Dictionary. Owing to the peculiar nature of the work, we have failed to find a publisher willing to bring it out upon his own responsibility; hence, in order to prevent, if possible, what Prof. Skeat, myself and many other people would regard as a national calamity, I have been obliged to take upon myself the whole responsibility of financing the Dictionary. Apart from the great philological value of such a work, it will be a thousand pities if the labours of so many hundred people extending over nearly a quarter of a Century, should eventually have been spent in vain through our failing to raise a sufficient number of subscribers.

I should be very grateful for your kind support in this great and difficult undertaking.

I remain, Dear Sir,  
Yours Sincerely  
J. Wright.



'one letter deep', and put on the shelves in this order. This was done before the seniors started the preliminaries of editing. Second, the juniors took all the A slips and arranged them 'two deep' in which state the seniors took over the different sections in turn. But B and C were sorted 'three deep', because there was a good deal more material than there was for A. Then a senior took e.g. *Bad-* or *Ban-*, sorted it finally for herself, and then made it up into articles. The senior assistants took a good-sized chunk apiece, and edited all the material it contained. Perhaps, roughly, we took 4,000-5,000 slips in each section, perhaps more. We kept working pretty closely to the alphabetical order—e.g. one would be working at *Cam-*, while another was doing *Can-*, and a third *Cap-*, and so on. We were always fairly near together in our work.

The Editor went minutely into *everything*, when it went up to him in a solid block of about 3,000 slips. If there were serious mistakes, and a word (i.e. a Dict. word) had to be written over again, it was sent back into the Workshop, with instructions to the assistant responsible. If the error was not serious, he may have corrected it himself—but the person who made the mistake was told about it.

[The Editor worked in a smaller room at the far end of the long room where the assistants were, leading out of this latter, which was the actual Workshop, as distinct from the Editor's Room.]

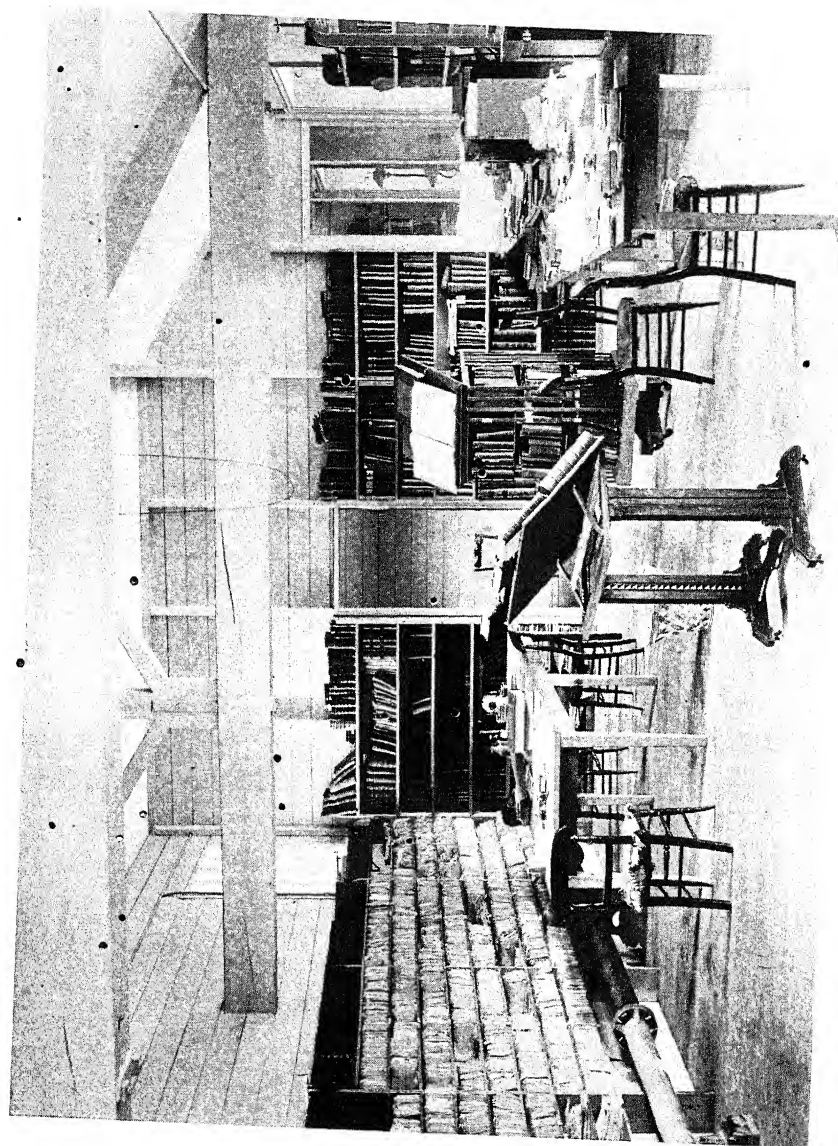
In the early days, the Editor very, very rarely wrote anything himself—certainly not any long article. I doubt whether he dealt himself with half-a-dozen words in Part I, except in revising our work. We gave him plenty to do! Our mistakes must have been nine-tenths mistakes of technique. As the work got into its stride, we gradually encountered and solved almost every possible technical difficulty. Then things could move much more rapidly. So very much ground had been broken by the Glossaries published by the Eng. Dial. Soc., that we assistants could not go very far wrong. We had mainly to follow their lead. But at first it gave us a great deal of trouble to 'pull it together', and keep the different sections in their right proportions, preserving unity of treatment. The staff were left to make their own mistakes in editing the material. Those mistakes were sometimes big ones—but, whether big or little, they never escaped the Editor's notice. 'This mustn't happen again' was heard very often in those days.

*Hours.* We worked every morning from 9 to 1 p.m., and also 2.30-5.30 p.m. on four afternoons a week. In the early months of the work

the Editor was there almost full time. Sometimes he would go out to give a lecture, and come back immediately after. From the very beginning the three hours in the afternoon were a very hard time. It was concentrated work, and the afternoons seemed so *drowsy*. I think it was Mrs. Mayhew who persuaded the Editor that a brief interval for tea might not really be a loss of time. It became a great feature of the afternoons. Dr. Wright was generally there, in the early days, and we all provided cake in turn. I remember his bursting in upon us one tea-time with the news of the Jameson Raid.

*Books in the Workshop.* Among the books of reference there was a delightful folio, Gerarde's *Herbal*, to be consulted for plant-names. It had most fascinating woodcuts. One day Dr. Wright was horrified to find a junior assistant calmly sitting on Gerarde, until he made clear to her the depth of her offending. Swainson's *Bird-Names* was another book of reference. The E.D.D. made a point of giving special attention to words which had any folk-lore associations, and there were reference books which helped us there too. The E.D.D. gave fairly full descriptions of funeral customs—special food consumed at funerals, etc.—because Yorkshire people would expect such details. The Editor explained to his South-country staff that a funeral was the most important function to a Yorkshireman; a christening came a poor second; and a wedding was nowhere. You were 'bidden' to a funeral, and sometimes to a christening—never to anything else. Of course we had North-country poets—Edwin Waugh, Ben Preston, A North-Country Garland, etc. etc. Others too, not so well known. There was a simple little story called 'T'Terrible Knitters e' Dēnt' given by an old Westmorland woman to Southey, and printed by him in *The Doctor*. It was in beautiful dialect, a picture of cottage industry in the eighteenth century; but there were still 'terrible knitters' in Dentdale at the time when the Dialect Dictionary was being written, and the old traditional patterns were still in use. Dr. Wright was proud of coming from the Brontë district: 'They had the real Yorkshire pride—good pride.'

Dr. Wright's own intimate knowledge of Yorkshire dialect writings helped so much. He knew the exact degree of popular affection which each little story or poem would call forth; he knew just which favourite quotations Yorkshire readers would expect to find in the E.D.D. No one else on the staff knew these things, and so we had continually to refer to him about such matters as Hartley's Clock Almanac, Tom Treddlehoyle, and other local celebrities. He once read aloud to us one



THE WORKSHOP



of Ben Preston's poems—Natterin' Nan—with a line which he chuckled over specially:

'A dahnreyt, upreyt, beng-up chap,  
Not mich unlike mysen.'

'Be sure you put that in', he said, for Preston was a Bradford man. Not one of the staff was a dialect speaker, or came from a county where dialect was a living force. 'But I think I can beat it into her', the Editor would say of a new-comer.

*Start with full staff.* In September 1895, Miss M. D. Harris, and Miss Hart (daughter of the Controller of the Clarendon Press) joined the staff. First of all we had to draw up our bibliography. [Each assistant was provided with her own interleaved copy of the bibliography of the glossaries and other books which had been read for the Dictionary, and she had to enter the recognized abbreviations, and the titles of any additional books which had been read since the list was printed.] At first each senior did her section quite independently of the others, and sent it up to the Editor in its alphabetical order. But after a time it was found that discrepancies of handling began to creep in, and therefore one senior went through all the copy before it went up to the Editor, in order to save him unnecessary trouble.

• Not only were we all new to the job, but under any circumstances A would have been a difficult letter to handle. In dialect, the vowels are shifting quantities; e.g. words normally beginning with A may be found under almost any other vowel, also under H, Y, or W. This meant a great deal of hunting about, and a large number of cross-references for future trouble. If only a Dictionary could begin with B! I remember how glad I was to see the last of A, and to get on to a consonant.

*Gaps in the material.* As soon as the actual editing began, it was seen very plainly that the material was somewhat uneven in quantity and in quality. Those districts which had been thoroughly well combed out for a good local Glossary—such as Miss Jackson's *Shropshire Word-Book*—were practically done for good and all. Yorkshire, of course, was well represented, having about a dozen Glossaries. But some of the Midland and Southern counties had very inadequate material. To fill these gaps to some extent we had a great number of local correspondents, to whom we could appeal as difficulties arose. But, although many of these correspondents were splendid in the way they allowed us to badger them, and splendid in their actual contributions to the Dictionary, nothing could ever quite make up for the initial lack of a good local



Glossary. For some time after the E.D.D. began we had insufficient material from Scotland. Jamieson's Dictionary was often the sole evidence for a word. We gradually remedied this; but MS. collections by local workers, which were often so valuable, came in very sparingly from Scotland. There was rather a rush of more or less dialect literature from Scotland about 1895—early Barrie, Crockett, the 'Kailyard School'. Dr. Wright had a very high opinion of Galt's Ayrshire novels, and thought they had never been rightly appreciated in England.

Dorset material caused us much uneasiness at the start. It was of excellent quality, practically all from William Barnes, the Dorset poet—but there was so little of it. Compared with the surrounding counties, Dorset was a dialect blank; and yet one knew that it could not be so in reality. In our difficulty we wrote to Thomas Hardy, explaining the position, and asking him if he could tell us of someone able and willing to help us, for the honour of Dorset. He very promptly put us in touch with his old friend Mr. H. G. Moule, Curator of the Dorchester Museum, who proved to be an excellent correspondent. Others too, came to the help of Dorset later.

*Correspondence.* All correspondence with subscribers was done by the Editor himself, and at the outset, this was very heavy. I know that when we assistants were hammering out our technique in September and early October 1895, he was working hard at correspondence. He was putting in full time at the Workshop, though we had not yet produced any copy for his revision. I know that he must have been working at high pressure—though perhaps the worst, when everything hung in the balance, was over—but he seemed to take it all in his stride. Which reminds me: what a very characteristic stride he had, making straight across the Workshop from door to door, to his own den. It was the walk of someone who goes straight to the point and gets there. The assistants sent out practically all the letters relating to the sections of the E.D.D. on which they were actually working. A junior would be deputed to write very simple post-cards—e.g. 'Is such-and-such a word used in your district?'—but the senior assistants decided to whom to write, and themselves drew up those letters of enquiry which needed to be carefully worded.

*Correspondents.* Our correspondents were of all sorts and conditions—country gentlemen, clergy, mill-workers, farmers, students, enthusiasts of all sorts, both scholars and homely folk. You could never tell until you tried them what their value would be to the Dictionary. Some of our best correspondents were unlettered people. There was a railway-

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Oct. 12. 1898:

Dear Sir or Madam, You will be interested to learn that the 'Workshop' for the English Dialect Dictionary has been fitted up and that we have begun to prepare the material for Press.

In working through the bibliography I find there are many books, containing dialect words, which still remain to be read for the Dictionary. I should be very thankful if you would kindly render us a little further assistance by reading one or more of the books contained in the enclosed list and forward the slips to me at your very earliest convenience.

Kindly communicate with me before beginning to read or transcribe a book, so as to prevent duplicate work,

I remain

Yours very faithfully  
J. Whigham.



signalman, Mr. B. Kirkby, on the line at Batley [Yorks., but he was an authority for the dialect of Westmorland], whose letters and answers to queries were among the very best we ever got, so accurate and scholarly, and always to the point. We got our local correspondents the best way we could. Many of the writers of Glossaries were still living, and of course they were the first persons that we turned to. Then there were members of the Eng. Dial. Society. One passed our enquiries on to another, and so we built up our list. Sometimes we wrote to a well-known writer—e.g. R. D. Blackmore for the Exmoor district; S. R. Crockett for Galloway, etc. Sometimes we appealed to a subscriber. People were extraordinarily kind in the trouble they took to answer our questions. The E.D.D. was deeply indebted to these unseen helpers.

Our correspondents often got a good deal of fun out of their work, though it may not be recorded in the E.D.D. One old dialect speaker was being most successfully 'tapped' until his wife interfered, and would not let him give our correspondent any more information, lest there should be 'summat behind it'. Another (who must have had a bad conscience) thought our seeker was somehow connected with the bailiffs! We wanted to ascertain the survival of a word once used in the Lancashire mill districts. Our correspondent accordingly, on his way home from business, got into a railway carriage full of mill lasses, and put his question to one of them. She looked round the carriage and said: 'Eh! any fool 'ud know that!' In the Dictionary, the word is described as 'Still in current use'. We had got what we wanted. [Joseph Wright said: 'Soon after we started we had over 1,000 correspondents. I had one assistant whose whole time was taken up in sending out queries.' Some 5,000 to 6,000 queries a year were sent out from the Workshop.

He used to like telling the following story: To save expense in postage, correspondents were in the habit of sending in a halfpenny envelope slips giving a dialect word with a sentence illustrating its use and meaning, followed by the sender's signature. On one occasion a missive of this kind was delivered marked 'Contains matter of the nature of a letter'. Joseph Wright paid the postman the penny demanded, but considering that this might happen scores of times a week, he wrote to the G.P.O. and complained that the charge was irregular. After some formal correspondence over the matter, the G.P.O. allowed that it was a mistake on their part, and an official in uniform appeared at the Workshop, and solemnly handed Joseph Wright a penny,

together with a Post Office form to be signed by him as having received that sum of money.]

The editing of the verb *to be* was begun by sending out a long *questionnaire*. Helpers in all parts of the country were asked to fill it in, so as to supplement the rather scanty material already among our slips. When these forms had all come back by post, they were cut up and pasted on to slips, and then shaped into copy. In the E.D.D., the verb *to be* occupies nearly ten closely printed columns. [The *questionnaire* contained 194 points, and was sent out to 150 persons.]

*Voluntary readers.* Most of these had done their work before I came to the E.D.D., or else were still in the middle of it. The Editor did *all* the arrangements with readers—allotting them their books and dealing with any correspondence that arose out of their work. The most I ever did was to despatch a parcel to someone, or untie a batch of slips. Some were writers of Glossaries who preferred to slip their own books—e.g. S. O. Addy, *Sheffield Glossary*, G. E. Dartnell, *Wilts Glossary*, Rev. W. D. Parish, *Sussex*, etc. A fair number became correspondents. Mr. Dartnell of Salisbury was a bank clerk—one of our most valued helpers, always willing and reliable; T. C. Peter was an official—I think Town Clerk—at Redruth; [Isaac Wilkinson—who sent many bundles of slips—was an ex-policeman; Thomas Darlington, author of *Folk-speech of South Cheshire*, was a school inspector who contributed material collected on his travels. One of the most indefatigable readers was the Rev. Alex. Warrack, an elderly Scottish minister. He continued to read books for the E.D.D. to the very end—constantly sending in slips by the thousand. We often wondered how he had any time left to minister to his flock! The Editor early authorized him to buy second-hand Scottish dialect literature, and he picked up many useful and valuable old books.]

*Proof-sheets.* These were read as follows: (1) By the printer's readers, who took out obvious blunders and put a question mark against anything they thought might be wrong. (2) By me, to see that the technique was right, and generally to be on the look-out for mistakes of any kind. (3) By the Editor, for final revision.

The first proof-sheets were most eagerly looked forward to by the Workshop staff. They were a great shock when they did come, for they were full of faults of every possible kind. Even Dr. Wright was depressed. To read a page of proof meant a hard morning's grind, followed by a second proof, and a revise before the Editor could pass it as fit for publication. This was a serious matter when we were so pressed for

time. What took as much as six or seven hours at the start, could be covered later in about twenty minutes. This gives some idea of what the early pages of the Dictionary meant to the staff. The cost of the first proof-sheets was staggering. There were anxious discussions with Mr. Hart, and a gloom over the Workshop. It really all came back to the staff and to perfection of technique, and to accuracy. But, at the outset, the printers too were not infallible in their use of our technique, though the Clarendon Press compositors and printer's readers were said to be the most wonderful in the world. Unfortunately, we were all new together to the E.D.D., and hence the high cost of printing.

Dr. Wright used to say that nine-tenths of the Dictionary work was mechanical—'but it's the other tenth that matters'.

*Rejected slips.* Besides the quotations which went into the Dictionary, there were many which remained unused, not because they were of no value, but from considerations of space. In a big word—i.e. one which was covered by 500 or even 1,000 slips—there might be as many as 60 to 100 of these 'rejected' slips. But every one of them was seen by the Editor, and considered on its merits. In fact, every single slip in the Workshop passed under his judgement before the copy went to press.

The amount of work put into the E.D.D. cannot be judged by an outsider. The big words, which spread over perhaps two or three pages, and loom large, were the easiest of all to edit, because there was so much evidence for them that little correspondence was involved, or none. It was the smaller words which gave the most trouble and anxiety, both to Editor and staff. The phrase 'Not known to our correspondents' often summed up a long and tiresome search.

*Part I.* The Editor had promised the subscribers that Part I should be in their hands not later than June 1896. It was a great struggle to keep that promise, for the beginning of the E.D.D. was such a drag. We had to work overtime, and at constant high pressure, and we only just managed to get the work done in time. We were all pretty well tired out by the time we had finished Part I. No other Part of the Dictionary ever gave one quarter of the trouble.

*Printers.* A small body of compositors, called 'the Ship', was set apart for setting up our type. To keep 'the Ship' together, we had to keep them regularly supplied with copy—in the early days a very difficult thing to do. They were constantly on our heels, and Dr. Wright would often come into the Workshop from the printing room to say that a thousand slips *must* be sent in by tomorrow, or the worst would happen. All

through Part I, the editor was hard pressed to keep ahead of the printers. His driving power and confidence were in constant demand.

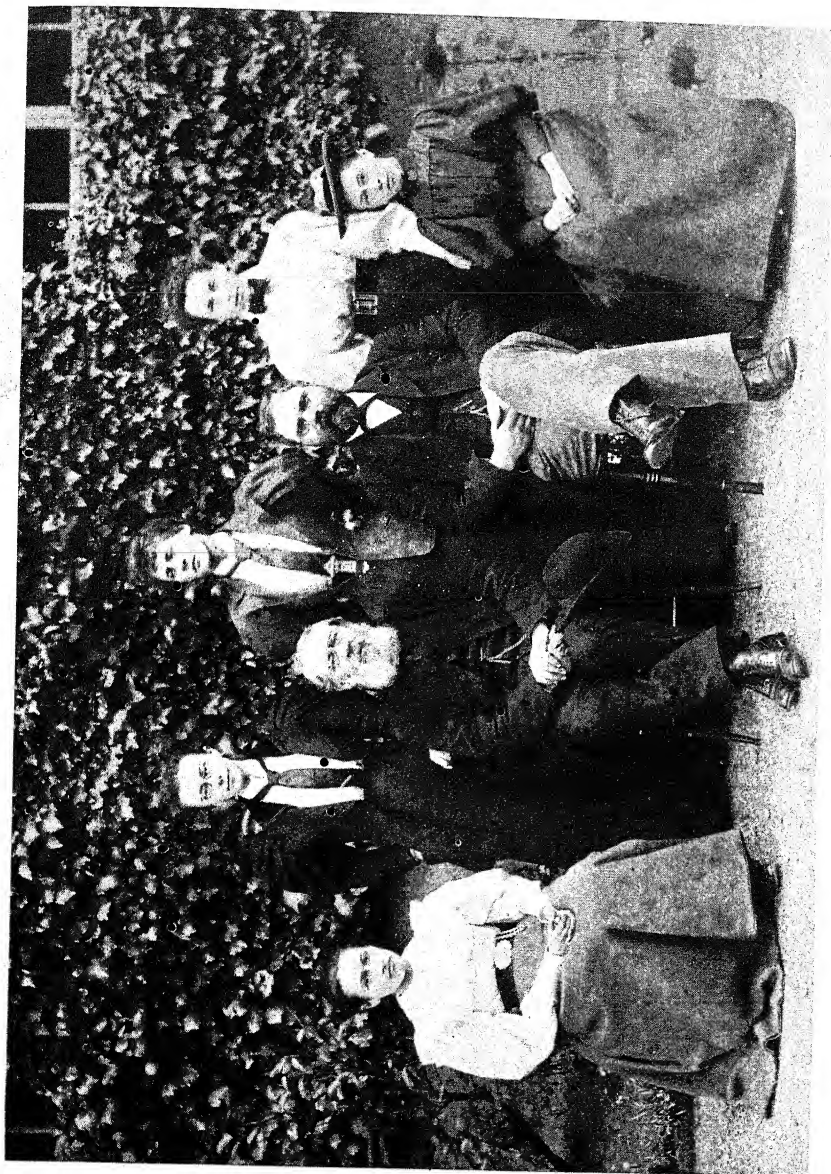
*Printer's readers.* The printer's readers of the Clarendon Press were most helpful in their handling of our proof-sheets. They detected mistakes or discrepancies in a way that was almost uncanny. When once we got fairly floated, they knew as much of our technique as we knew ourselves, though goodness knows how they found out.

*Conclusion.* Dr. Wright really held the strings of *everything*, except the actual printing. No detail was too small for him to go into. He kept a very sharp eye on the expenses of the Workshop—'and that's Yorkshire', he would say.

Miss Harris did not remain long on the Dictionary staff. In the autumn of 1896 her place was taken by Miss Lilian Yates, who had been a student at Girton College, Cambridge, and had taken a Second Class in the History Tripos in 1893, and in the Law Tripos, Part I, in 1894. She writes: 'I stayed on for 8 years (with a break of 12 months when I went back to Girton College as Librarian), and there were various changes on the staff. . . . I stayed on to the end—the last 6 months working on the Bibliography.' Giving some notes about the daily routine, she adds: 'I must not forget to mention that we had a break of 15 minutes for our tea during the afternoon. This was a great institution, and we all enjoyed it, especially as very often the Professor was in convivial mood, and the time was often prolonged beyond the official 15 minutes. . . . I always look back with pleasure on my 8 years work on the Dialect Dictionary, and always found Dr. Wright most kind and considerate.'

The afternoon tea is so well remembered by those who shared it, that when collecting reminiscences about the 'Workshop' for this book, one and all of my informants told me of it, as an integral part of the daily proceedings. Even in the scanty notes Joseph Wright himself dictated I find: 'Tea-time came out of the afternoon hours. The porter brought up tea at 4 o'clock. He supplied *good* tea—it was very good—at a very reasonable price per head. Cakes we each bought in turn.'

Miss Beatrice Covernton joined the staff in the autumn of



THE E.D.D. STAFF IN SEPTEMBER 1896

From left to right: (standing) Miss Yates, Miss Hart, Miss Horsley; (sitting) Miss Eagleston, Mr. Mayhew, The Editor, Miss Partridge





1897, when Miss Partridge left. The Editor always said it took six weeks for a new senior assistant to learn her work, besides involving much time spent by the others in teaching her; so that any change was an interruption. Miss Covernton had been at Holloway College, and from there had taken the Oxford Honours School of English Language and Literature, in which she had obtained a First Class. She remained on the Dictionary staff till 1903. It was she who told me that when—owing to changes—they were short-handed on the staff, 'Mr. George Ostler, the press-reader, came in and worked at a table in the Workshop. He was wonderfully accurate in his knowledge of the technique.' Joseph Wright had a great regard for him. In the Preface to the Dialect Grammar (1905) he wrote: 'My sincere thanks are due to Mr. G. Ostler, the press-reader, for the most excellent manner in which he has read the press-proofs of all the Dictionary, Supplement, Bibliography, and Grammar.' He also supplied numbers of Oxfordshire words and phrases, which may be found in the Dictionary marked 'G. O.' He died in 1929. I believe Joseph Wright knew all the men at the Press who were engaged in the printing of the Dictionary. As recently as 1929, a middle-aged woman who opened the door to me when I went to call on Miss Wordsworth, asked after 'the Professor'; and then, to explain her interest in news of him, she said: 'My father and brother knew him so well at the Press in old days—always a kind word for everybody, he had.'

Finally, in September 1899 came Miss Edith Miller, who had been a pupil of mine, and was my travelling companion during my romantic visit to Göttingen in 1896. She was an Oxford Home Student, and took a First Class in English in 1898. When the news of Joseph Wright's retirement from the Professorship appeared in the papers, she wrote to him, February 5, 1925: 'The *Evening News* has brought back to me so many memories of the days at the Press, of the Quadrangle with the pond, and the shelves belined with the dusty slips, and the tea-parties we used to give. It seems to me that it was a

very peaceful, prosperous time. . . . I hold it one of the honours of my life to have worked under you. . . .’ Later she sent me the following notes:

In the morning we worked from 9 to 1, and these were always concentrated times when there was no talking except on matters of the most pressing business. In the afternoon we always relaxed more, and it was then as a general rule that visitors were admitted . . . the last quarter of an hour being supposed to make up for the time taken for tea, but I fear—Oh! I very much fear—that we spent considerably more than 15 minutes over our cups. Our excuse may have been that when the Professor was present himself a still longer time was thus employed. If visitors came he liked to make it a feast, and it was *de rigueur* in June that there should be strawberries. If he cut the cake it was necessary to ask for a ‘Southern’ not a ‘Yorkshire’ slice; even a ‘Midland’ one was thicker than most people were prepared to tackle. Many of the guests were from Germany. I well remember one borrowing the Professor’s straw hat in which, rather than in his own top hat, to attend St. Giles’ Fair. It was worn over the frock coat of his ceremonious calls.

*A few dialect words.* Some correspondents had no very clear idea of what was or was not dialect. One old gentleman—writing I think from the Midlands—sent in ‘Liberty dress’, which he defined as ‘a child’s loose, unconfined garment’. He had clearly never heard of the celebrated firm in Regent Street! The use of the word ‘wires’ for knitting-pins is so universal in Scotland, that none of our Scotch correspondents sent it in; and when one was written to on the subject, he replied indignantly that it was the proper word. If, in centuries to come, scholars dispute the date of the E.D.D., one entry at least can be used as internal evidence. At the very end of 1904 the judgement of the House of Lords finally allotted the funds of the Church of Scotland to the very small remnant henceforward known as the ‘wee Frees’. This name was given too late to be included in its proper place among the compounds of ‘wee’; it has, however been inserted in the Supplement.

We both lost a faithful friend when Miss Miller passed away on November 1, 1929. I am glad to think that her name is enshrined in the author’s Preface to the Dialect Grammar, on which she was—as he has often told me—his main helper: ‘My sincere thanks are due to Miss E. Miller, who with such

skill and scholarship helped to systematize and tabulate the masses of material for the grammar, as a worthy finish to six years of able and devoted work as my assistant.'

Even after the business of publishing the Dictionary had begun, the Editor still found time to carry on his propaganda work outside by addressing meetings in the North and elsewhere. I have newspaper reports of speeches in Bradford and Birmingham in August and October 1895; and again at Bradford in February 1896: 'On Sunday afternoon Dr. Joseph Wright of Oxford delivered a lecture on the English Dialect Dictionary to the members of the Bradford Sunday Society, in the Temperance Hall, Leeds Road, Bradford. In the course of his lecture, which was listened to with much interest, Dr. Wright gave a brief history of the movement which had led up to the compilation of the new dictionary of English dialects. . . . Proceeding to speak of the grammar of the Bradford dialect, Dr. Wright expressed the opinion that a person would find greater difficulty in learning a dialect which was not his mother speech than he would in getting a practical knowledge of French or German, so subtle was the dialectic grammar. Yet this grammar was habitually used with such accuracy by those who spoke the dialect that to misuse a form indicated the contamination of the board school.'<sup>1</sup> The *Bradford Observer* commenting on the lecture said: 'The Windhill lad revisited his old haunts on Sunday evening. He "thees and thahs" his old mates as they chat over pipe and glass, just as in former days, absolutely unspoilt by all his greatness, though he must be counted one of the most distinguished philological scholars in Europe.'

At the beginning of 1896 a Memorial 'To the Right Honourable Arthur James Balfour, M.P., First Lord of H.M.'s Treasury' was drawn up by Professor Skeat, applying for a Civil List Pension for the Editor of the English Dialect Dictionary, which 'will be a work of great National importance, and is eminently deserving of assistance from the State'. Joseph

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Brighouse News*, Feb. 29, 1896.

Wright had put all his savings into his new venture—over £2,000, he says in the Preface to Volume I—and there had been an unexpected legacy from Mr. Thomas Hallam, but without some substantial addition to the available funds, the project could not be carried out on the scale he had planned. In his dictated notes for this chapter he said: 'Skeat and Dr. Murray (specially) did a great deal towards my getting the pension—it was my idea, but they did it, one can't do it oneself. Mr. Balfour gave me £600 down, and said he would see what could be done. I sent him the completed Volume I, and he gave me the pension—but note the conditions. I never pleaded poverty under any conditions. These pensions are usually given for poverty, but that question never came in, and there was never any bother about getting the pension.' (But this is anticipating history.)

The Memorial gave a brief sketch of the various stages of the Dictionary scheme from the foundation of the English Dialect Society in 1873, down to the actual preparation of the work for the press under the able editorship of Joseph Wright, who had also undertaken the 'pecuniary risk'. A period of eight years—the Memorial pointed out—'is the minimum amount of time required for the main body of the work'; then will come the inevitable supplement and the detailed grammatical introduction. . . . After using every effort, the number [of subscribers] has at last been raised to 920; and it will probably be greater when the first part has been published. But allowance must be made for the loss of subscribers by death and other causes; and when the printer's bill and other expenses have been defrayed, there will be nothing left for the Editor for all his services and sacrifices during so long a period. . . . Professor Joseph Wright appeals for help, solely in the hope that it may be possible for him to continue the great work of editing the English Dialect Dictionary, a work of great national importance. After long search, it appears that Professor Joseph Wright is the only person known who is competent to do the work. Without his help, the whole scheme falls through; and the extraordinary

## English Dialect Society.

*Honorary Secretary:* PROF. J. WRIGHT, M.A., 6 Norham Road, Oxford.

*Treasurer:* REV. A. L. MAYHEW, M.A., 18 Bradmore Road, Oxford.

*Bankers:* THE LONDON AND COUNTY BANK, High Street, Oxford.

*Publisher:* HENRY FROWDE, Oxford University Press, Amen Corner, London.

Jan. 18. 1896.

Dear Sir, Professor Skeat of Cambridge has just drawn up a statement of how matters stand with the English Dialect Dictionary. It is now quite certain that the work cannot be done in a satisfactory manner without State aid.

I take the liberty of sending you the memorial along with a printed list of distinguished people who have already signed, and shall be very thankful if you will kindly sign it and return it to me or Prof. Skeat.

It will be a thousand pities if the labours of so many hundred people extending over nearly a quarter of a century, should eventually have been spent in vain through want of material support to carry out this great national work.

I remain, Dear Sir,  
Yours sincerely  
J. Wright.



efforts by which he has been enabled to render it even possible show that he is the right person to conduct it to a successful end. . . . To carry out the work in a manner worthy of the British nation cannot possibly be done without national aid.'

The preliminary appeal for signatures to this document met with an immediate and hearty response. Many of the signatories—apparently all those to whom Joseph Wright himself sent a personal request—added a gracious letter of good wishes. I can only quote a few of them. 'It is a rule with me not to sign Memorials, because it is so difficult to draw lines when one has so many requests. But I cannot hesitate to sign this' (the Archbishop of Canterbury). 'I have very gladly signed, and I return herewith, the Memorial which you have been so good as to send me. I venture to congratulate you heartily on the remarkable witness to your work which is expressed in it' (the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford). 'I need not say how earnestly I hope that this Memorial will be as successful as it deserves to be' (Professor A. C. Bradley, Glasgow). 'An undertaking of such importance, which has already been so well begun, ought not to be allowed to drop for want of funds!' (Professor Driver, Oxford). 'I wish I were wealthy enough to give you the amount you want, for the work promises to be very valuable, and will never be *better* done (even if ever done at all) than under the present management. . . . It does seem strange that while money is flung away recklessly on all sorts of absurdities, there should be found no wealthy merchant who would honour himself by placing at your disposal the requisite funds for the suitable completion of this well-conceived and admirably executed work, for the specimens you sent me were beyond all praise' (Professor Robert Atkinson, Dublin). Dr. Furnivall wrote a long and friendly letter:

11 Jan. 1896.

Napier came in and told us [Council Meeting of the Philological Society] that you'd had to take the whole risk of the venture on your own shoulders, a fact of which we knew nothing before. We were all very sorry that Hart and Frowde



were not to bear the brunt of the undertaking, but we rejoicet that you had resolved to carry it thro'. It has involved a great sacrifice for you, & will be a burden on you for years. This morning comes your Memorial. Of course I'll sign it. . . . I unluckily haven't a £5 note invested, so I cannot help you; and I'm too ignorant of fonetics to do Dialect work. I can only honour you for your unselfishness & your pluck. Yorkshire is fine stuff.

Yrs F. J. F.

'Professor Skeat wrote asking for twenty copies, which he would get signed in Cambridge; and active members of the Dialect Society, such as Mr. Heslop and Mr. Nodal, eagerly collected the signatures of local Mayors and M.P.s. The Duke of Devonshire directed his secretary to say that 'as Mr. Balfour's colleague he is unable to sign the Memorial, but he will take an opportunity of privately impressing upon him the importance which is attached to the completion of the work to which you refer.'

Finally the Memorial was ready with an imposing list of 156 names—the original copies circulated now forming a rather valuable collection of autograph signatures—and Professor Skeat said (Feb. 2, 1896): 'I hope it will be shortly in Mr. Balfour's hands. We have done all that is possible—and must await the result with whatever patience we can command. There are always great delays, even in successful cases.' But though he counselled patience, before long he was evidently growing anxious. On March 10 he wrote:

I am very sorry to hear your news, because it is so hard to know what to do for the best. Certainly if you can only see Mr. Balfour, it will explain everything. I hope you will succeed in doing so.

I am very sorry the expenses are so great: because you really will have to pull in somehow. I think you will have absolutely to stop the buying of new books. You can only do what your tether will allow you to do. You cannot do the best possible.

I have bad news for you, I fear. . . . You do not realise that, practically, hardly *any* subscriptions have been paid in! . . . I think some retrenchment must come in somewhere. . . .

But whilst he was tabulating all the gloomy details of the *very* scanty funds in hand for continuing the Dictionary, the Editor's heart had been gladdened by hopeful news from 10 Downing Street. Mr. Balfour's secretary, Mr. Bernard Mallet,<sup>1</sup> writing on March 9, suggested that Joseph Wright should come up to London to see him and discuss the subject of the Memorial. The interview took place on March 14, and on the same day Mr. Mallet wrote:

I have reported the result of our talk today to Mr. Balfour, and he retains his opinion that the proper way to assist the great undertaking with which you are connected will be, in the first instance, by a grant from the Royal Bounty Fund. He proposes making you a grant from the Royal Bounty Fund of £600, which will be equivalent to a pension at the rate of £200 a year for 3 years. At the end of that time it will be open to him, or any other First Lord who may succeed him, to make you a fresh grant, or to offer you a pension if the work has been carried out in the manner you anticipate.

Of course, before making this grant, Mr. Balfour would require a guarantee that the work *will* be proceeded with.

I may add that if, during the three years, the work progresses satisfactorily, your claim to a pension will be very much strengthened; but you will understand that he cannot give a *pledge* as to what he, or his successor, may be able to do at the end of that time.

I shall be much obliged if you will from time to time keep me informed of the progress of the work. . . .

From Mr. Mallet's next letter I gather that Joseph Wright submitted a statement promising the regular yearly issue of the Dictionary. This was no doubt similar to the 'conditions'

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Bernard Mallet, K.C.B.

which he drew up later when he received the pension. [Fortunately a rough draft of a letter outlining these 'conditions' has been preserved—belonging to 1898.]

10, *Downing Street*. March 23, 1896.

I am much obliged for your letter which I have shewn to Mr. Balfour.

I will give directions for the issue of the money to you. I will keep your letter and enclosure, but I do not think Mr. Balfour wished for more than an assurance from you that the work *would* be prosecuted, if he gave you the money.

He is quite satisfied that the money is well spent in assisting a work like that on which you are engaged.

*We* do not officially announce these grants, but there can be no harm if you think it will assist your undertaking, in your allowing the fact of £600 having been granted from the Royal Bounty Fund to become known through the press or otherwise.

Professor Skeat was disappointed at first that the pension was not immediately forthcoming, but owned: 'It is quite what one expected: it is never usual in England to give one except for work *done*: the mere promise to do it is not enough. . . . If you can possibly hang on for 2 or 3 years—then the statement that the work cannot otherwise be carried out will be much strengthened. I always feared that it could not be got in advance.' However, as soon as the money grant had actually been made, his usual good humoured optimism was restored (April 2, 1896): 'Please accept my heartiest congratulations as to Mr. Balfour's benevolence. I hope it will not preclude you from presenting future claims. Still, in any case, it is a nice pretty little present to get, and I hope it will do a great deal to cheer you up—tho' I believe you have, all through, managed to preserve a cheerful frame of mind. That's the secret—always eat a good dinner, & take enough exercise for digestion. These precautions taken, it's wonderful what man can go through!' Amongst other letters of congratulation is

one from Mr. Frowde (April 28, 1896): 'I was greatly pleased to see it announced in the papers that Mr. Balfour had put £600 to so good a purpose, and congratulate you and the Dictionary most heartily.'

The hardest part of the enterprise was now over: Joseph Wright had obtained some help with the burden of financial responsibility, he had constructed his designs for the architecture of the Dictionary, he had fitted up and organized his 'Workshop', Part I was well on its way towards publication. His self-reliance was such that he never contemplated failure in anything he had undertaken; he settled down calmly to the work which he estimated would take him ten years to complete, and, as we all know, he achieved it within the allotted time. Part I was published on July 1, 1896, and the final Part in February 1905, and the Dialect Grammar—completing the entire scheme—was issued in September of the same year. Friends and journalists coined and circulated grand phrases describing the coming Dictionary as a work of national importance, a storehouse of folk-lore, a mine of learning for philologists and other scholars, &c.—all very pleasant to hear and to read, but none knew better than the Editor what concentrated thought and unremitting drudgery these successive years would entail, if the Dictionary was to verify all these lofty expectations, as he intended it should do.

Part I—*A to Ballot*—duly appeared according to programme. I have it recorded by Joseph Wright himself, in a letter to me (Sept. 6, 1896), that even the Clarendon Press was astonished at the success of the past year's work, which had now brought the English Dialect Dictionary into actual being: 'The Controller of the Press said yesterday—"After what you accomplished between April of last year and June of this, we think nothing is impossible to you".' The 'Prefatory Note' to Part I says that it 'contains 2,166 simple and compound words, and 500 phrases, illustrated by 8,536 quotations', not including quotations from early writers given in the etymological notes at the end of an article. It stated further that 'in addition to

the great amount of material sent in from unprinted sources, upwards of 2,500 dialect glossaries and works containing dialect words have been read and excerpted for the purposes of the Dictionary. . . . There is now in the Workshop over a million and a half of slips—and the number increases daily.’

Advance copies of Part I were sent to all the principal London and North-country newspapers, so that a flood of reviews and notices was poured out during July and August. The references in the ‘Prefatory Note’ to the origin and work of the Dialect Society led some hasty journalists into errors which caused some amusement to the Editor, who saw ascribed to him the founding of the English Dialect Society, and the starting of the Dialect Dictionary ‘23 years ago’. He enclosed several of these newspaper notices in his letters to me at the time, so that I have his comments on them. The ‘best review’—he wrote on August 1—‘appeared yesterday in the *Scottish Review*’. The writer had evidently taken trouble to read the work itself, and not merely its preface: ‘After a careful examination of the Part before us, we have no hesitation in saying that it is scarcely possible to speak too highly of the exhaustive and scholarly way in which the work has been done. . . . A careful search for omissions has not resulted in the discovery of more than a dozen, and some of these at least may be excused.’ Joseph Wright was much pleased with a review in the *Athenæum* of September 26, which he said ‘will do good in the learned world’—(*vide* letter to me, Sept. 30). He valued the writer’s criticisms, as coming from some one who understood the subject. The article is much too long even to summarize here, I can only quote a sentence or two from the concluding paragraph: ‘No one who can at all appreciate the difficulties to be encountered will regard what Prof. Wright has so far accomplished as anything short of a brilliant success. If the succeeding parts maintain the level reached in this first specimen—and they may be expected to do much more than this—“The English Dialect Dictionary” will deserve a place among the very best productions of English philological scholarship.’

Hundreds of people wrote personal letters of congratulation, many of the most cordial being from workers who had supplied material, e.g. 'I duly received the first part of the Dialect Dictionary and have been much engrossed and interested in perusing it. May I be permitted to offer you my modest but sincere congratulations on its great success—the lucid way in which you have arranged it seems to me absolutely marvellous. . . . I must confess I am much gratified to find you have been able to make so much use of my contributions' (Percy Maylam. Canterbury).

The following letter from Mr. Balfour's secretary doubtless pleased the Editor more than all the others he received after the appearance of Part I (July 3, 1896): 'Mr. Balfour has just been looking through your first number with much interest and appreciation and wishes me to thank you for your kind attention in sending him a special copy. He is very glad to see your great work launched in so promising a manner.

'It is a most handsome volume. I am glad to think I have had a very small part in helping in the matter.'

The next important event in the history of the Dialect Dictionary was our marriage. In fixing the date of the wedding, the chief point which had to be considered was the punctual appearance of Part II. Joseph Wright's letters to me reiterated: 'No possible doubt must arise as to my being able to fulfil my promise to the Government and the British public'—he had pledged his word that the Parts should follow each other 'at intervals of six months, until the whole work is completed.'<sup>1</sup> On September 6 he wrote: 'By Oct. 5, 96 pp. *will* be done, so that there will be no risk about Part II appearing at the right time.' Part I had celebrated our engagement, and now the forthcoming Part II smiled on our wedding, and we were happily married on October 6, 1896, as I have described in a previous chapter. The Editor only allowed himself ten days for the honeymoon, and then we came back together to Oxford and the English Dialect Dictionary. At first my chief occupa-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Prospectus.*

tion was reading and slipping books containing dialect, and underlining words in books to be sent out to workers who could not do the selecting themselves. Hitherto Joseph Wright had done this marking, but now I took such elementary business off his hands. Most of the books were very dull as literature, because all the classic authors had been excerpted, but I soon became an adept at skipping the standard English. Then I helped with the clerical work at home. I took charge of the address book (in duplicate) containing the lists of subscribers: I added in fresh names, and kept the old addresses up to date. There was always somebody who had moved house, and wanted us to register a new address; or somebody had died and had to be crossed off if the subscription ceased, or if the whole Dictionary had been paid for at the start, the heirs had to be entered for receiving the remaining Parts. I wrote the labels when a Part was ready for distribution, since we found by experience that an unskilled hand mixed up the initials and names of the various Browns and Robinsons, and all the labels had to be gone through again for verification. The parcels, of course, were made up at the Press and posted from there. Joseph Wright told me that when he set himself to calculate ways and means for the production of the Dictionary as a business concern from start to finish, he included in his estimates not only the cost of packing and postage of the two yearly Parts, but also the cost of the brown paper and string! I also helped with the treasurer's work, which was all done at home in the study, and not at the 'Workshop'. Towards the end of 1896 Professor Skeat wrote to Joseph Wright begging that he would take over the whole of the clerical and financial business connected with subscriptions to the Dictionary: 'I shall be truly thankful if you can undertake this; as I rather want to get out of the new year's scrimmage!' A printed notice to this effect was sent out to all the subscribers: 'Subscribers are informed that the business arrangements of the *English Dialect Dictionary* being now complete, subscriptions for Parts III and IV, due January 1, 1897, should be forwarded (not to Prof. Skeat, who kindly took

charge of the preliminary business arrangements, but) to—Professor Joseph Wright, Langdale House, Park Town, Oxford. Also any new or overdue subscriptions to Parts I and II should be sent henceforward to the same address.’ So now it was Joseph Wright who sent out reminders when necessary, and all the receipts for subscriptions, and I entered them into account-books. Sometimes a letter and a cheque would come from a new subscriber with an almost illegible signature, and much study of letter and cheque side by side was needed to decipher it. As a last resort I made a free-hand drawing on an envelope, and hoped that it might receive recognition at the other end. A German on a holiday in London, wishing to pay his subscription whilst in this country, bought a postal order, filled it in with the Editor’s name and address, and dropped it into the nearest pillar-box. It was duly delivered, but the question was, who had sent it? Joseph Wright recognized the sender’s handwriting, and was able to acknowledge the receipt of the money. To prevent a recurrence of this difficulty, a special notice was sent to foreigners: ‘Subscribers who send Post Office Orders from abroad are requested to send to the Editor a postcard with their name and address at the same time; otherwise there is often much difficulty in identifying the senders.’

We lived with the Dictionary, and we found life so intensely interesting that we never thought of weighing up the various occupations of each day as it came. Each portion, however small, fitted into its place in the big unity of heart and purpose. One often hears people talk as if enjoyment of life was confined to off-duty hours and week-end jaunts. I never knew Joseph Wright to go anywhere for a week-end. I think few men have spent more time and found more real enjoyment in hard work than he did. And I believe the influence he spread round him was such that this was the atmosphere of the ‘Workshop’, so that his assistants never felt released from irksome toil when the door was closed behind them at the end of the day.

Among his few notes dictated to me is: ‘Don’t forget to say that you did the sub-editing.’ This work meant putting



together different forms and pronunciations of the same word, which had naturally been separated by the original sorters of the slips. For example, the *hickwall*, or green woodpecker, is a fairly ubiquitous bird, with numbers of aliases: *eckle*, *ickle*, *hefful*, *hoodall*, *yaffle*, *yockel*, &c. These had to be detected and classified under his right name. Or again, a common verb like *fetch* occurs as *fatch*, *fotch*, *vetch*, *votch*, &c. I was not on the scene at the outset, and did not take up the whole of this part of the work for over a year after my arrival. I am indebted to Miss Yates for the following notes: 'I think', she writes, 'in the early days when the materials were sorted only "two deep", it was probably quite necessary for the Editor to assemble the various parts of verbs, pronunciations, &c. before the bundles went on to the assistants. I cannot recollect the date when you took over this work, but my feeling is that the Editor did this work *himself* until you were able to relieve him of it.' This, Miss Yates goes on to say, explains certain references in some letters written by Joseph Wright to me, when I had gone on a short visit to West Kirby without him in 1898, e.g. (March 23) 'If all goes well I shall finish *d*+a vowel this week, and shall then be able to revise some copy for the press'; (March 29) 'I finished *Du-* this morning, and shall let *Dr-* wait till our return. The assistants will finish *Di-*, and have begun *Do-* before they leave for their holidays.' Miss Yates concludes with: 'I do not think the Editor ever took over what was originally the assistants' work, i.e. made the material up into articles—the sub-editing which he did (until you relieved him of the work) was probably much more important and required more specialised knowledge than the more technical part of making up the articles.' The bundles of slips—sorted 'two deep'—were sent up to me at Langdale House. I never worked in the 'Workshop'; when I went there, it was as a visitor in the afternoon.

When there was a new prospectus to be sent out, to rake in more subscribers, I naturally helped with the circularization. Some copies of the letter sent out with the first prospectus in

1895 were lithographs, but later Joseph Wright used to employ a girl to write letters by hand. I have before me a receipt written in copy-book script: 'Received from Dr. Wright the sum of six Pounds, six Shillings and sixpence for copying 1000 letters relating to the English Dialect Dictionary. . . . Feb. 24, 1897.' Quite late in life he sometimes employed a typist, but even a printed prospectus was sent out in a closed envelope. These envelopes—with *English Dialect Dictionary* and the Editor's address printed outside—were made for him by the thousand at various times. He estimated that for every postal packet which brought in a subscriber, he had spent £1 on those which produced nothing. All the same, he prided himself on being able to collect more subscriptions, and waste fewer stamps and circulars in the process than anybody else would have done in like fields. He would get lists of Antiquarian and Historical Societies, of County Associations, Schools, and Libraries, he would wade through the *Literary Year Book*, *Minerva*, and *Who's Who*, selecting likely names, and addressing envelopes steadily by the hour. I still have hundreds left, which he never found time to fill and do up for posting. He had a marvellous memory for names, and would never address two envelopes to the same man, though the name might appear in two or three of the lists in hand. Indeed, occasionally he tracked down a new subscriber with an illegible signature by remembering his address in a given list. Sometimes we wrote circular letters ourselves, but this was after the Dictionary was all but finished, and we had more time for pushing its sale. We competed with each other as to the number of letters we could turn out in the hour. I could just beat him over a one-hour course, but I could not sustain the pace for perhaps three hours on end without a pause. I often wondered he did not develop writer's cramp when one of these outbursts of circularizing took place. Then there was the stamping and sealing of the envelopes. He invented surprising methods which made the folding of circulars and the doing up of postal packets a fine art in automatic celerity combined with

the strictest accuracy—and this mechanical business he could also continue by the hour. I suppose it was mainly solidity of character, but perhaps he had never lost the effects of early training in the monotonous labour of ‘doffing’ bobbins in the spinning-room of a Yorkshire mill.

On Wednesdays and Saturdays—the ‘Workshop’ half-holidays—we used in the summer to take long bicycle rides out to Islip, or Wantage, or Bablock Hythe, where we would have tea and afterwards saunter back home. In those days one could ‘saunter’ on a bicycle in a country lane without fear of motor traffic, and when we felt so disposed, we dismounted and sat peacefully on a gate by the roadside till the spirit moved us to continue our journey. Our favourite outing was to Bicester, about twelve miles each way, along lanes bordered by wide strips of grass, an easy distance, and level going all the way. When working, Joseph Wright purposely did not take violent exercise, for he considered it a burning of the candle at both ends. He thought some of his friends strained their constitutions by taking practically no exercise during the week, and then walking twenty or thirty miles on a Sunday. So we rode out on bicycles for air and country scenery, and if we beat any record, it was for the maximum of time spent in covering a minimum of miles.

Punctually to scheduled time, Part II, was issued on January 1, 1897, and early in that year a new prospectus, with specimen pages taken from the actual printed Dictionary, was circulated with subscription forms announcing that Parts I and II were already out, and promising the issue of Parts III and IV ‘on July 1, 1897, and January 1, 1898 respectively’. To the very end there was never any failure in the punctuality with which each successive issue made its appearance. I remember once hearing a Professor from Scandinavia who was calling on us say to the Editor: ‘We set our clocks by the arrival of your Dictionary, in our country!’ An advance copy had been sent both to Mr. Balfour and to Mr. Bernard Mallet, and the latter wrote (Dec. 18, 1896): ‘*Many* thanks for the copies of the Dictionary. It really is a splendid bit of work.’ Newspapers

again broadcast helpful notices. 'The second part of this great work, which appears punctually at the appointed date, is fully equal in interest and ability of execution to its predecessor' (*Manchester Guardian*). 'It is a monument of patience and pains' (*Academy*). 'Some facts stated by the Editor in a prefatory note show the stupendous amount of labour involved in its compilation. The present part—Ballow to Blare—contains 2,695 simple and compound words, and 267 phrases, illustrated by 7,567 quotations. . . . There are, in addition, 5,728 references to glossaries, to MS. collections of dialect words, and to other sources; making a total of 13,295 references, exclusive of a large number of quotations, etc., from early writers, which are also given' (*Westminster Gazette*). 'The quality of the work in this second part confirms the high opinion which we have previously expressed of Prof. Wright's ability and diligence. In our notice of the first part we had occasion to point out a few oversights of no great importance; in the second, which we have scrutinized with equal minuteness, we have hardly been able to discover any mistake worth mentioning' (*Athenæum*). From information given by the Editor in his prefatory note the writer in the *Athenæum* pointed out as 'worth notice that while the letter A occupies in the "Dialect Dictionary" only a few pages more than in Webster's "English Dictionary" the portion of the letter B ending with *blare* fills more than four times the space that it occupies in that work. This curious disproportion is due to the fact that the words beginning with A in literary English are chiefly learned words of Latin and Greek origin, which, of course, do not come into dialects at all, while those beginning with B are mainly popular words, which, for the most part, have senses in dialect more or less different from their meaning in standard English.'

The English Dialect Society was wound up—as I have previously mentioned—at the close of 1896. A 'last Notice' was issued to the Subscribers by Professor Skeat on December 31, saying that 'No subscriptions are asked for in 1897, as no more publications will be issued by the Society. Now that

*The English Dialect Dictionary* is at last well started, the object for which the Society was originally established is practically attained.' A footnote to the 'Financial Statement for the Years 1893-6' said: 'Whatever balance may remain after all claims have been met will be handed over to the account of the English Dialect Dictionary; and any profit arising from the further sale of our publications will likewise be used for helping to defray the heavy expenses attendant upon this great undertaking.'

To give even an epitome of the contents of the bulky scrap-books of press-cuttings we accumulated between 1896 and 1905, would make a volume in itself, without including any subscribers' letters, which were often very gracious and kindly, e.g. 'I have much pleasure in sending you . . . my subscription for Parts III and IV of the *English Dialect Dictionary*, and I may say I have seldom or never paid any money more cheerfully than the price of your admirable work'. Professor Skeat wrote enthusiastically on receipt of Part III (June 26, 1897): 'How you *are* getting on! It is all excellent and wonderful, and I congratulate you very heartily.' The introductory paragraph of an article in the *Academy* (Dec. 18, 1897) on Part IV—*Caddle* to *Chuck*—is worth quoting as a sample of the sympathetic encouragement given by reviewers in the more anxious and arduous days when the Dictionary was yet young: 'The appearance of the fourth instalment of Prof. Wright's Dictionary a full month before the announced date may be taken as a sign of the earnestness and enthusiasm with which the work is being conducted. When we consider that the tendency manifest at the outset of all dictionary-making is for the difficulties to increase rather than to diminish—a fact which has been especially emphasised in Prof. Wright's case this year—we can only seek an explanation of this promptness in the personality of the director himself. To his untiring vigilance and North-country grit the whole plan and execution of the Dialect Dictionary is due, for though material had been collected for many years by the Dialect Society, it was not

until Prof. Wright's appearance in the field of philology that the master hand was recognised, and this is said in full acknowledgment of the invaluable labours of Dr. Ellis and Prof. Skeat.'

At the time when the grant of £600 from the Royal Bounty was given in aid of the publication of the Dictionary in 1896, Mr. Balfour had held out hopes of a pension for the Editor at the end of three years, provided that the work continued to make good progress. Further letters from his secretary, Mr. Bernard Mallet, indicate that long before the expiration of that period, Joseph Wright was taking steps to push forward the matter, and that Mr. Bernard Mallet was championing the cause so far as he could. He wrote (June 21, 1897): 'Very many thanks. I will do what you ask. I hear *excellent* accounts of the Dictionary, which will clearly be a most valuable work'; and again (Nov. 20, 1897): 'I am now unfortunately leaving Mr. Balfour for promotion, and I write a line to say that I will take care that your application through Lord Aldenham for further consideration of the case of the Dialect Dictionary is carefully considered when the time comes by the First Lord of the Treasury. Indeed I have already as a preliminary discussed the matter with him.'

*Inland Revenue, Somerset House. March 10, 1898.*

I have read your preface [to Vol. I of the E.D.D.] with much interest. It gives a very good idea of the great labour of your undertaking.

I daresay you will have placed the whole matter fully before Mr. Balfour yourself, & that you will see his present private secretary. I can now do but little, but will gladly discuss it with him after I have seen you & heard exactly how the matter stands.

I did recommend the matter to Mr. Parry's special attention, & know that Mr. Balfour takes a great interest in the work. . . . I should think it was nearly time for you to lay your case before Mr. Balfour; but you had much better do it by writing or going direct to Downing Street.

The next letters on the subject are written by Mr. F. S. Parry who succeeded Mr. Bernard Mallet as secretary to Mr. Balfour. March 12, 1898: 'I will bring your letter before Mr. Balfour at the first opportunity, as I should like to have his general views before talking the matter over with you. After that, I should be very glad to see you, and will write and suggest a day.' March 19, 1898: 'I have now had an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Balfour about your Dictionary, and should be very happy to see you any day next week.'

From now to the end of March was a time of great suspense. I was away at West Kirby, and in almost every one of Joseph Wright's daily letters to me he refers to this matter of the pension, and his anxious waiting for news. March 23: 'I do hope I shall have some definite and final news from Mr. P. before I leave. I am anxious that the matter should be definitely settled before many days, because I can't send any D to press until I know exactly what the fruits of all my labours are to be in the future.' March 25: 'There is no news from Mr. P., which is a source of great suspense. I do hope I shall hear on Sunday morning. I feel as if all will end well, but still I can't help feeling anxious until I receive definite news on the subject. If Mr. B. should stick to his original proposal, I have not yet made up my mind what will be best to be done under the circumstances. In no case will I allow a board of trustees to be formed. Such a plan might easily end in the E.D.D. being brought in some way in connexion with the N.E.D. which I must prevent at all cost.' March 26: 'I thought I should be able to finish Du- today, but now find it will take me all day on Monday and Tuesday. I am much disappointed, for I had hoped to go through some of the Da- copy before leaving for Barmouth. I made enquiry in the Entry-room this morning if there was any hurry for copy. I learnt that my 'Ship' was engaged upon some urgent work, so I shall not send in any copy until we return from Barmouth. I shall be very glad of a rest, for the long pressure of work is making me feel rather stupid and dull.' March 27: 'There is unfortunately no news

from London today. I quite expected to hear something, but I suppose Mr. B. is out of town for the week-end. I do hope I shall not be kept much longer in suspense. My *cool* impression is that there is no real reason for uneasiness, but still I cannot help wishing to have final and definite news.' March 29: 'As I had no pressing work this afternoon, I have been making a rough calculation as to how far we can get with prepared copy by the end of the year. If we all work hard I think we shall finish, or nearly finish, the letter F by the end of the year. . . . I saw from the paper this morning that Mr. B. was out of town for the week-end, so that will partly account for my not having had any news from him. I do hope I shall hear in a day or two, for this long suspense is dreadful. If I do not hear from him soon, I shall write to him *direct*, and mark the letter *private*, which will ensure the letter getting into his hands.' March 30: 'The people at the Press sent round the clean sheets of the next number of the "Periodical" containing the article on *our* Dictionary. I have just read it through, but it is difficult to "doctor" another man's article. I am sending it on to you by this post. There is no news from London—if I do not hear soon I shall write to Mr. P. and urge that the matter should be settled at once, owing to the great inconvenience to which I am being put.' The following day Joseph Wright met me at Ruabon station—on our way together to Barmouth—with the good news that put an end to our suspense:

10 Downing Street. Whitehall S.W. 31 March 1898.

DEAR MR. WRIGHT,

Owing to the pressure of work I had not an opportunity of reporting our conversation to Mr. Balfour till yesterday; and I am happy to inform you that he is willing to promise to submit your name to the Queen next July for the grant of a Civil List pension of £200, if he is still in office then; the grant being liable to be withdrawn if the Dictionary is not completed properly within a reasonable time, as suggested by you.



You will, I am sure, remember what I said about keeping this promise confidential until the pension has actually been approved by Her Majesty.

The conditions will have to be worded rather more specifically, & perhaps you would kindly suggest the form of words. The time-limit suggested in your letter of the 11th was 15 years, but do not cramp yourself unnecessarily, & keep a good margin for contingencies.

If there is any point which you would like to talk over, I shall always be happy to see you here.

Yours sincerely,  
F. S. PARRY

Together with this letter, Joseph Wright preserved a rough copy of his reply:

*Barmouth. April 3, 1898.*

DEAR MR. PARRY,

Many thanks for your very kind letter which arrived just as I was leaving home for a fortnight. I need hardly say how thankful I am to you and Mr. Balfour for the great interest you have shown in the material welfare of the Dictionary. Mr. Balfour can rest assured that the Dictionary will be 'completed properly and within a reasonable time'. And I am particularly pleased that he has seen his way to make the pension conditional upon the work being carried out properly. As you know, I too was anxious that the pension should be made conditional, because it involves an important principle which, if carried out in all cases similar to mine, will do an immense amount of good. Acting upon the suggestion contained in your letter, I will draw up the wording of the conditions in such a way as to give Mr. Balfour an absolute guarantee that the work of the Dictionary will be carried out both in *quality* and *quantity* in the same manner as the parts already issued. That is to say: I will undertake to produce *two Parts* a year, each part containing on an average 144 pages, and to maintain the present quality of the work, as also to issue the parts at regular

intervals of six months until the whole Dictionary is completed, supplement included. If at any time I should fail to comply with the above conditions, the pension shall be liable to be withdrawn. When I return to Oxford I will draw up the conditions in a formal manner and submit them to you. I shall then be very thankful if you can spare a few minutes for us to discuss the whole question, as I am anxious that the conditions should be of such a nature as to give Mr. Balfour entire satisfaction. I should be much obliged if you would kindly convey to him my sincere gratitude for the munificent manner in which he has helped this great and difficult undertaking.

The communication contained in your letter shall, of course, remain a profound secret, until the pension has been approved by Her Majesty.

On July 6 Mr. Parry wrote as follows:

Forgive my delay in answering your letter of the 1st, but it has taken some little time to think out the exact wording of the 'Conditions'.

Civil List Pensions are always granted 'during pleasure' and are therefore theoretically revokeable at any time, but I would propose to insert the following words in the Royal Warrant, if they should meet your views—

'The grant of the Pension is made subject to the condition that the said Joseph Wright shall between the 1st January and the 31st December in every year issue for publication two parts of the said Dictionary, each part containing not less than 144 pages, until the whole Dictionary, including supplements, is completed, and shall maintain the present quality of the work to the satisfaction of the First Commissioner of Our Treasury for the time being, and the Pension hereby granted may be withdrawn or the payment thereof suspended should this condition not be fulfilled.'

If you agree to this, it is hardly worth while to trouble you to come up to town.

Further, July 8:

'I don't think there will be any objection to inserting the words "on an average" as you suggest.

'My idea was to grant the pension to Prof. Wright "to enable him to continue the publication of the English Dialect Dictionary"—this being the special service which has led to the grant. Will that suit your views?'

The 'conditions' being finally settled, the Pension was now granted:

10 *Downing Street, Whitehall, S.W.* 25 *July* 1898.

DEAR MR. WRIGHT,

I am very glad to be able to inform you that the Queen has now approved the grant to you of a Civil List pension of £200 a year.

The list of such pensions which will be published next year will state that the grant is to Mr. Joseph Wright, D.C.L., 'in consideration, and for the promotion, of his services to Philology, especially in connection with his services as Editor of the English Dialect Dictionary'.

I am sending the papers on to the Treasury to prepare the necessary Warrant which will contain the clause suggested in my letter to you of the 6th July, with the addition of the words 'on an average' after 'each part containing'.

Yours sincerely,

F. S. PARRY.

Mr. Bernard Mallet, writing a letter of congratulation, said, January 7, 1899: 'I am delighted to hear that your Civil List Pension is decided on, & I shall always feel glad that I had a hand originally in getting Government assistance for your great work.'

All this time Joseph Wright had relaxed none of his efforts to keep things in the 'Workshop' going full steam ahead, with the result that Part V—itself a bulkier Part than any previous one—appeared early in June, completing Volume I, and including a full Preface by the Editor giving statistics of the contents of

the whole issue of the Dictionary up to date. These statistics, the Preface says, 'will show what an immense wealth of words there is in our dialects, and from them some idea can also be formed of the enormous amount of labour involved in the production of this volume'. Excluding quotations from early writers, and the many thousands of cross-references, 'this volume contains 17,519 simple and compound words, and 2,248 phrases, illustrated by 42,915 quotations. . . . There are, in addition, 39,581 references to glossaries', &c., 'making a total of 82,496 references'. *The Times* (June 25) gave it a cordial welcome in an article beginning: 'Professor Joseph Wright deserves the congratulations of all students, and of everyone who admires a good piece of work, on the completion of the first volume of "The English Dialect Dictionary"'. When the first part appeared, we gave some account of the scheme, and we may now say that it has thus far been carried out very perfectly, with scarcely a deviation from the original plan, and that we now possess an instalment, carried down to the end of the letter C, of a wonderfully full, accurate, and scholarly dictionary of the English dialects.' The *Daily Chronicle* (June 24) gave extra space to its notice of a new Part, and said: 'The mortality among dictionaries, as among men, is higher in their infancy, but now that the first grand climacteric is safely passed and nearly one-fourth of the estimated span has been accomplished, we may rest assured that, if the editor's life is spared for the next ten years, we shall possess "a work that can never become antiquated, the largest and most comprehensive dialect dictionary ever published in any country"'. We are quoting from the preface, and the cynic may feel inclined to sneer at the bold advertisement of the editor; but if ever a man since St. Paul was entitled to boast, it is Dr. Joseph Wright.'

He was specially encouraged by the interest in his work shown in his native county. In a letter he wrote to me from Windhill (June 12, 1898) he said: 'The Librarian of the Saltaire Institute told me last night that the E.D.D. is more in demand than any other work in the reference department. It is

wonderful what an interest is taken in the Dictionary by working people round about here. I of course went to the Liberal Club last night a little before 9 o'clock, and the place was packed, and I had an excellent opportunity of hearing the dialect in its purest form, for they all talk the dialect to me. I even managed to pick up some words that I had either forgotten or else never known. And then besides, I heard some first-rate stories.'

The successful completion of the first volume was by no means the completion of the Dictionary, and Joseph Wright felt the continual need of increasing the numbers of subscribers to compensate for those who would fall out from one cause or another before the end of such a long period of years was reached. New subscription forms and prospectuses were issued, and sent out in all directions: 'Subscriptions are now invited for Parts I-VI. . . . Part V is now ready. Part VI will be published in December, 1898.' I find a letter from J. M. Barrie, dated July 4, 1898: 'I am delighted to become a subscriber to the English Dialect Dictionary, and thank you heartily for the prospectus.'

Through the kindness of Dr. Winternitz I am able here to quote extracts from letters written to him by Joseph Wright, in which he reports progress of the great work. Dec. 3, 1898: 'I am thankful to say that the Dictionary is making steady progress. We shall finish preparing F for press by the middle of January. Now that my wife has more time for sub-editing the material ahead of us at the Workshop, it makes an enormous difference in the rate of progress. From the next Part onwards I am going to increase the size of the Parts from 144 pp. to 180, *without* raising the subscription price; by doing this I shall be able to finish the Dictionary by 1904. This will, of course, mean working at high pressure for the next five years, but I don't mind that.' Dec. 26, 1899: 'As usual all my available time is taken up with the Dictionary. I just finished Vol. II (D-G) in time to have it bound as a Christmas present for my wife who has sub-edited the whole of this volume. At the Workshop

we have finished the preparation for press of the whole of the letter H which will make about 300 pp. I J K will be very small letters, so that if all goes well we shall get to the end of the letter M by the next Christmas holidays. When we get as far as that letter I shall feel that we are making *headway* through the alphabet. However I am thankful to say we are not behind-hand in my original calculation, to finish the whole of the Dictionary, Supplement, Bibliography, and Grammar by the end of 1905. I did hope I should be able to do some other work while the Dictionary was going on, but I find it impossible, it swallows up all my available time.'

In the autumn of 1899 Professor (now Sir) Israel Gollancz was raising money for a portrait of Professor Skeat, 'and *also* to found a University Prize—a Skeat University Prize for English'. In a letter thanking Joseph Wright for a 'generous subscription' he said, Nov. 27, 1899: 'S. has done so much for English. Perhaps he never did a better thing than when he got you to edit the Dialect Dictionary. He could not have imagined, however, that it would be so glorious an achievement. God bless you for it!

'... It is a long time since I last was cheered by the sight of you. I hope you are flourishing.'

Although the Editor was 'working at high pressure', and increasing the output of printed pages, the *quality* of the Dictionary was in no way allowed to suffer, and Volume II showed 'no falling off in respect of thoroughness and fulness'.<sup>1</sup> The *Athenæum* (Aug. 1900), reviewing 'the sixteen hundred pages now published of Prof. Wright's great work', said: 'In view of the great difficulties that have to be encountered, the rapidity with which the dictionary is being produced is certainly remarkable, and the quality of the workmanship, which from the first was excellent, has perceptibly improved in the later portions. The editor has acquired a more thorough mastery of the bibliography of English dialects, and has perfected his methods of exhausting the sources of information.'

<sup>1</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, July 11, 1900.

When at the end of 1900 Joseph Wright became a candidate for the full Professorship of Comparative Philology, he wrote the following letter to Professor Holthausen. It belongs more fitly to another part of my record, but I insert it here, for the sake of the reference to the progress of the Dictionary:

### THE ENGLISH DIALECT DICTIONARY

*Editor.* PROF. J. WRIGHT. Langdale House, Park Town,  
Oxford.

Nov. 5, 1900.

The Professorship of Comparative Philology is now vacant through the death of Prof. Max Müller. I was appointed his Deputy in Feb. 1891, and since that time I have done all the work connected with the chair. I enclose herewith a few of the testimonials I sent in when I was a Candidate for the Deputy-Professorship, and also a list of the lectures I have given and the books I have published since I came to Oxford in 1888. There will be an election to the Professorship and I am naturally a Candidate. For this reason I am asking a few of the leading Scholars for testimonials in support of my Candidature. I shall be so grateful if you will very kindly give me a testimonial as one of your old pupils in O. Norse, Phonetics etc. There is no German who really knows so much about me as you do, and therefore I shall value a testimonial from you all the more.

Since I began the publication of the Dictionary in 1895, I have not been able to do much other work in the shape of publishing books. I collected all the material for a large Comparative Greek grammar, and wrote nearly all the phonology out for press, but I was obliged to put it off altogether until the Dictionary is finished, which absorbs all my spare time all the year round. I have now finished nearly 2,500 pages of it which is more than half the work. And then there will be the comprehensive Grammar of all the dialects, for which I have collected an enormous amount of material. As you will have seen from the preface to Vol. I of the Dictionary, I was unable to find

a publisher willing to finance the work, and I accordingly have had to finance it myself, which has absorbed all my savings (considerably over £2000). So that whether I obtain the professorship or not means everything to me.

My wife wishes me to say how delighted she is with your edition of Havelok which she finds most useful in teaching her pupils for the Honours School up here. . . .

A letter to Professor Curtis a year later gives another first-hand report of progress:

*Langdale House, Park Town, Oxford. Oct. 12, 1901.*

Many thanks for your very kind postcard offering to read some more books for the Dictionary. You will be pleased to hear that every book containing dialect words has so far as I know been read for the Dictionary. You will be interested to hear that we are making steady progress with the work. We shall begin this next week to prepare *S* for press. This is by far the largest letter—about 70 feet (cir. 400,000) of slips! It has taken one of my Assistants 10 months to put *S* into strict alphabetical order. As you know, I never live from hand to mouth with the printer, but always take care to be a good way ahead of him. He has not yet finished the printing of *Q*. *R* will all be printed off next March.

But as time goes on I get more and more hampered with the financial side of the work. Perhaps you don't know the fact that I bring out the work entirely upon my own hook. . . . The great difficulty is the loss of Subscribers through death from year to year.

It would be a great service if you could induce any of your Frankfurt friends or Institutions to become a Subscriber. The whole work will be 6 volumes of about 28 Parts of an average of about 180 pp. 12 Parts have now been issued. The annual subscription is one guinea for two Parts. But in order to get more Subscribers I should be glad to offer the following terms:—New subscribers to pay 2 guineas at once and five subsequent annual subscriptions of 2 guineas. In return for which I will



send at once 12 Parts, and the remaining Parts of the work at the rate of 4 Parts a year until the whole work is completed. I shall be very grateful for your kind help in the matter.

The next letter to Professor Curtis and one to Professor Holthausen are concerned with the financial aspect of the Dictionary:

[To Professor Curtis.]

*Nov. 9, 1901.*

Many thanks for your very kind letter. It is so good of you to subscribe yourself and to try to get others to do the same. I sent you the other day Parts I to XII, and Parts XIII and XIV will be sent in a few days, they are now being done up in covers.

I should have written to thank you sooner, but have been waiting until I could send you a few copies of the *New* prospectus, which will give people some little idea of the work. . . . My great anxiety just now is to secure myself as far as possible from further pecuniary loss with the work. Your next subscription will not be due until *Nov. 1902*. . . . I am delighted to hear that you like the work in Frankfurt.

[To Professor Holthausen.]

*Oct. 20, 1901.*

I am sending you per book-post a complete list of the publications of the English Dialect Society and am able to make your University Library or Seminar an offer which is not likely to occur again.

As you already know, the whole burden of financing the Dialect Dictionary falls upon myself and it costs over £1400 a year to carry on the work. When the Dial. Society was wound up, it was decided to hand over for the benefit of the Dictionary the few remaining copies of its publications. Only about 300-350 copies of each work were printed, and as the bulk of the Subscribers were libraries, the publications will in time become exceedingly scarce and difficult to procure, and accordingly the prices will be very high. Notwithstanding this fact, I have decided to offer to supply your Univ. Library or

Seminar with a complete set (with the exception of 2 or 3 books which are already out of print) *at one half the subscription price*. Or if you cannot take the whole set, to supply such volumes as you may select at one half the *published price*. I shall be grateful for your kind help in the matter, as I am anxious to raise funds to pay the printer's bill for the Dictionary during the last half year. . . .

[To Dr. Winternitz.]

Dec. 30, 1901.

. . . We are making steady progress with the Dictionary; 4 volumes are printed, and nearly 200 pp. of volume V. Next year at this time we hope to be working at the last volume (VI) and then will come the grammar of all the dialects. I intend, if all goes well, to finish the Complete Work by the end of 1904 or beginning of 1905. I am already planning another big undertaking. . . .

At the beginning of 1902 Part XIV was issued to subscribers, carrying the Dictionary on to the end of the letter L, and completing Vol. III. Printed copy in the 'Workshop'—as stated in the above letter—was now so far ahead of the publication, that Joseph Wright decided to increase the yearly output from two Parts to four in the future, and he issued a circular to this effect: 'Subscribers have hitherto paid a guinea annually and received two parts, containing on an average 333 pages instead of the 280 promised in the original prospectus. Professor Wright asks them now to pay twice as much and to receive four parts a year. He has got so far with the work that he is able to promise that if these conditions are accepted the great dictionary shall be completed before the end of 1905.'<sup>1</sup> This would mean the issue in future of a whole volume (about 700 pp.) annually, instead of half a volume. The Editor and his staff had been for some time at work on the letter S.<sup>2</sup> In a letter to me (March 19, 1902) he said: 'I am getting on with the proof-sheets steadily. We shall send the whole of Sc- to

<sup>1</sup> *Morning Post*, Jan. 10, 1902

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* letter quoted above, Oct. 12, 1901, J. W. to Prof. Curtis.

press tomorrow, and this will easily keep the printer going until we finish Sh-, which will be about the end of next week. We shall then be entirely out of the difficulty of keeping the printer going for the rest of S.'

Now and again it happened that a reviewer of the Dictionary, after a few commonplace remarks about the scope and magnitude of the work, would pick out of a volume of 700 pages two or three etymologies which he chanced to have uprooted privately, and seek to enhance the value of his superior knowledge of these unimportant details by captious criticism of the whole work. I well remember the article of this type—the only really bad one which ever appeared—which occurred in the summer of 1902. Even reading it after the lapse of nearly thirty years rouses my old indignation, but Joseph Wright was no more disturbed by it then or since, than is the course of a river disturbed by the birth of a mayfly. Not so Mr. Mayhew, he had been much upset by it, and evidently had received calm and comforting words from his more philosophic chief, when he wrote:

*Aug. 26, 1902.*

I thank you sincerely for your long letter. It was very kind of you to spend so much time on me in your holidays. I agree with you on your estimate of the review, and think there can be no doubt that it was dictated by spite and envy. . . .

As for myself I do not care a snap of the finger for the charge made by the reviewer that the special portion of the work in which I had the honour of taking a share shows signs of haste and perfunctory treatment. I know the charge or the insinuation is false. I am perfectly satisfied that we have all done our best, *and had plenty of time in which to do our best*. There was no hurry, certainly no perfunctory treatment. We have accomplished so much, because our motto has been 'Ohne Hast und ohne Rast'. . . .

The Editor kept his promise of increased output, and the publication of Volume IV—M to Q—was completed by the early

spring of 1903. He now saw his way to giving more direct attention to the second part of his original scheme, viz. the Dialect Grammar. The last sheet of the Dictionary was actually printed that year.

At the annual meeting of the Yorkshire Dialect Society, held at York on October 17, 1903, the subject of the Report read to the members was mainly the Dictionary, and Yorkshire's pride and joy therein: 'It should be brought to the knowledge of the members that the great work of the English Dialect Dictionary, to which our Founder, Dr. Joseph Wright, of Oxford, has for many years devoted his time, his great learning and attainments,\* and his enormous labours, is now practically completed. Dr. Wright sent us a few days ago the proof of the last page of the letter Z. The Supplement only remains to be finished.

'The Dictionary is a monumental work. . . . Those who know most of dialect will be best able to appreciate its multitudinous and exact detail, and the wonderful completeness of Dr. Wright's work. It was undertaken only just in time. Before many years have passed, much of the material, of the oral tradition, and of the available knowledge of individuals of dialect words, will have disappeared. Happily for the history of the English language and literature, and for the knowledge of future generations of their own tongue, the opportunity has not been allowed to escape. To Dr. Wright alone is this happy result due, and your Council are confident that the members of the Society will wish their congratulations on the completion of the work to be conveyed to him. A resolution to that end will be submitted to the Meeting.' The Chairman of the Council, Mr. Philip Unwin, then sent a letter to Joseph Wright:

*Bradford. Oct. 19, 1903.*

I have the pleasure on behalf of the Yorks. Dialect Society to send you enclosed a print of a resolution which was passed by acclamation at their Annual Meeting, held on the 17th inst. at York, the Marquis of Ripon in the Chair.

(Resolution.) That this Society, assembled at its Annual Meeting at York, desires to offer to Professor Joseph Wright, M.A., L.L.D., Ph.D., of Oxford, its congratulations on the practical completion of his great English Dialect Dictionary. The Society may claim to be specially qualified to appreciate the great learning, the patient research, and the enormous labours which Professor Wright has devoted to this enterprise, which have had entire success in the exactness, the fulness, and the wonderful amount of correct and learned detail which the Dictionary contains. It is undoubtedly the final English Dialect Dictionary, as the materials from which it was composed are fast disappearing. It is entirely worthy to fill that distinguished place in the History of Literature.

Mr. Heslop, who read a paper to the Society on this occasion, wrote a few days later:

*Newcastle-on-Tyne. Oct. 21, 1903.*

At York on Saturday the proceedings centred in yourself. I wish you could have heard all the hearty expressions on the completion of your huge task. It was felt that Yorkshire had even more than ever something to be proud of in her Son, and those good men made the solemn precincts of the Philosophical Society's hall ring again with their applause as the resolution was submitted. . . .

Joseph Wright communicated to the newspapers the fact that the Dictionary was in print, and that he had a new scheme on hand for which he would need outside help in collecting material. A paragraph in the *Week's Survey* (Oct. 24, 1903) said: 'It is now announced that the English Dialect Dictionary is finished, although not yet all published. This fine work will remain an abiding monument of Professor Joseph Wright's pluck, energy, and sound scholarship. From beginning to end Dr. Wright has borne the burden on his own shoulders, and it is satisfactory to think that in this case virtue has had its reward. Not the least remarkable thing about the dictionary

is that the editor has kept every one of his promises to subscribers; but he is a master of method. And now the indefatigable professor, whose history is a romance of scholarship, is turning his attention to a dialect grammar, and it is hoped that for this, as for the dictionary, he will find a host of willing helpers.'

The memorial to Mr. Balfour in 1896 stated that the Dictionary would be followed by a 'detailed grammatical introduction', which together with 'the inevitable supplement' would 'occupy several more years' beyond the period of eight years estimated for the Dictionary itself. Joseph Wright had, I think, from the start planned to incorporate a Grammar on a much larger scale than a mere 'introduction', knowing that for future students of philology this would prove the most important part of the work. Certainly there is ample evidence that he was collecting material for it in 1900. The *Glasgow Herald* of July 11, 1900, contained a paragraph as follows: 'In forwarding to us for review the second volume of the English Dialect Dictionary, Dr. Joseph Wright writes: "You may be interested to learn that I hope to finish volume IV for the press by the end of this year. Now that I have got well on the way with the Dictionary, I have begun to get the material together for the comprehensive comparative grammar of all the dialects. I have also phonographed a large number of dialects, and I hope to get many more in the course of the next few years."' He devised and printed a circular containing a page of specially constructed sentences to be translated into the several dialects, with a further page of minute directions as to how 'to speak the Specimen into the Phonograph'. 'The object which I have in view in trying to obtain about 500 phonographic specimens of the dialects is partly to enable me to check the material which I am collecting for a Comprehensive Comparative Grammar of all the English Dialects in the United Kingdom, and partly to hand down to posterity a faithful record of the dialects as spoken at the end of the nineteenth century.'

He bought a phonograph, and made a few records himself.

I have them still, dated June and July 1900. Some we labelled 'Sunday Stories', because they were his favourite dialect anecdotes which he used to tell at our Sunday tea-parties for undergraduates. There is also a Somerset record made by Mr. Elworthy, and a Scottish one by Professor Craigie.

In the end, his attempt to collect reliable phonographic specimens proved a failure. His own explanation of the reason for this is given—a quarter of a century later—in a letter he wrote to the secretary of the Yorkshire Dialect Society. I also give his further letters on the subject, which are too good to omit:

*Oxford. October 12, 1926.*

DEAR MISS ALLISON,

Many thanks for kindly sending me a copy of 'Notes on Gramophone Recording' which I have read with great interest. It would be a great achievement if the Yorkshire Dialect Society were able to get together a number of reliable specimens of the dialects on the lines indicated in the 'Notes'. But it will not be so easy to procure such specimens in Yorkshire as it is in Norway where nearly everyone can speak the dialect of his district with perfect accuracy, whereas in Yorkshire and in England generally it is very difficult to find people who can speak a dialect without being seriously mixed up with the so-called Standard language. There are thousands of working people who speak their dialect properly so long as they are talking among themselves, but so soon as they come to speak with educated people, especially strangers, they become hopelessly mixed in their pronunciation. It would require some little time to train each uneducated man for the purpose before attempting to take a record of his dialect.

Many years ago I spent endless time and money in trying to get reliable specimens from various parts of the country to enable me to check the material I had collected for the English Dialect Grammar. I sent out some thousands of the enclosed instructions, and received a considerable number of replies from all parts of the country. I made innumerable journeys

for the purpose of recording the specimens taken from Vol. V of Early English Pronunciation by the late Dr. A. J. Ellis, but with few exceptions my labours were practically in vain, because the people selected generally only knew how to pronounce isolated words accurately, and these were genuine dialect words which did not occur in the Standard language. When it came to the pronunciation of common everyday words which occurred both in the Standard language and in the dialect, they were very inaccurate. They had no more idea than 'the man in the moon' how to use correctly e.g. the personal pronouns and auxiliary verbs, with the result that they were incapable of rendering the specimen sentences in the dialect. You should consult Mr. Cowling on the subject. He can and doubtless will be pleased to help you.

I do hope the Council of the Society will not turn the project down without giving it their serious consideration. In my opinion it would be found to be far easier to get the necessary funds together on the lines suggested by Mr. Bruff, than to find suitable people to furnish the dialect information required. It will require some organized effort to get the funds required, but Yorkshire people will, I am sure, respond to an appeal of this kind, *I* for one!

*Oxford. Nov. 3, 1926.*

DEAR MISS ALLISON,

I am very sorry to hear that all your and Mr. Bruff's efforts have practically resulted in nothing being done beyond passing a lukewarm Resolution. I did hope that the Meeting would at least have passed a strongly worded resolution urging the Council of the Society to take energetic steps to procure the necessary number of Records required to illustrate the typical dialects of Yorkshire. If this had been done there would be no serious difficulty in raising the funds needed for the purpose. This could be accomplished if some determined person—man or woman—would take up the task in the *name* of the Council. This is, as in most other cases, pre-eminently a one man job. Personally I have never had much faith in Committees. If



Noah's Ark had had to be built by a Committee it is not improbable that they would still be discussing its structure, as a great preacher once said in his sermon. If you could get someone to take up the subject in earnest, and to write a carefully worded article along with an appeal for funds to all the Yorkshire newspapers, and to send copies of the article soon after to the Members of all the various Yorkshire Societies, including the Society of Yorkshiremen in London, which is a large and important Society, I firmly believe that the results would be highly satisfactory.

Unfortunately the Yorkshire Dialect Society is now the only Society of its kind in England. The English Dialect Society came to an end in 1896, the year after I began to prepare for press the material for the English Dialect Dictionary. I do hope that you will not become 'downhearted' and give up the project. If I were a younger man, I would most gladly take up the 'cudgels' and do everything in my power to see the thing through, as I have always dearly loved to perform tasks which people regarded as impossible, but I am now much too old for such a job.

*Jan. 2, 1927.*

DEAR MISS ALLISON,

I am very sorry that illness should have prevented me from answering your kind letter sooner. I should like to be of help to you in the writing of the appeal for funds to carry out the project, but I feel that I am not the right person to do it. I think that it ought to be done in Leeds itself by some prominent person who is on the spot. Personally I feel that, if you could manage to get Professor Lascelles Abercrombie interested in the project, he is *the* man for you. I would gladly sign it along with his name and yours (as Secretary to the Dial. Society), and would also contribute to the Fund as liberally as I can. Before the appeal is sent out the question ought to be settled where the permanent home of the Records is to be! The Yorks. Dial. Society may come to an end some day, but not so with Leeds University. I believe that it would materially strengthen

the appeal if it were definitely stated that the permanent home is to be the Department of English in the University of Leeds, and this statement would no doubt at once meet with the sympathy and help of both the Vice-Chancellor and Professor Abercrombie.

*Feb. 11, 1928.*

DEAR MISS ALLISON,

I am very pleased to hear of the progress made in your efforts to obtain reliable records of the Yorkshire dialects. It will require time, patience, and determination to carry the project through successfully, but I feel sure that you will do everything in your power to see it through. When collecting the material for the English Dialect Grammar I found the enclosed sentences constructed by the late Dr. Ellis very useful for the purpose. If they would be of any use to you, I shall be pleased to send you a bundle of them. You will find a phonetic rendering of the sentences in my dialect on pp. 170-75 of the Windhill Dialect Grammar. Your collectors on the spot should be left a free hand to decide whether 'a simple story' or detached sentences will be the better for obtaining what is needed. But in my opinion there can, I think, be no doubt that detached sentences will yield the most valuable results, because of the great variety of different phonological and syntactical points they can be made to embrace.

When the time comes for you to collect contributions 'in kind', I shall be delighted to send you a cheque for at least ten guineas, and if the project meets with the response it deserves, you may rely upon my sending more than that sum.

With our united kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

J. WRIGHT.

Although the above letters constitute a digression from the strict course of my narrative, they have a closer connexion with it than is apparent at first sight, for Joseph Wright was the originator of the Yorkshire Dialect Society, which was founded

in 1897. The *Academy* (July 17, 1897), recording the foundation, said: 'This body, which has its centre in Bradford, a city quite famous for the vigour of its intellectual life, is a direct offspring of the committee formed there by Dr. Wright two years ago.' The present secretary, Mr. Halliday, writing to me (March 3, 1930), said: 'Our own Society is one of his youngest children, and any good thing we have been able to do, we owe to his inspiration, and his sympathy.' And we have in these letters proof that his sympathy survived the passing of three decades.

I remember we took the phonograph with us to Settle, but we could not find anybody who spoke the pure dialect of the district. Owing to the long-established lime-works round about, people from other counties had come to work in the quarries, and had intermarried with the natives. Our landlady's husband was by birth a Cornishman. And the educated people who professed to know the dialect were—as he describes in the first letter here quoted—inconsistent in the pronunciation and ignorant of the grammar, especially where the dialect usage of forms was much more complicated than in the standard language. At our Sunday teas he would often illustrate the various forms and uses of the pronoun *I* in his dialect. In recent years when we had the wireless, if the B.B.C. announced that Mr. Somebody was going to speak in some dialect, Joseph Wright would listen to about three sentences, and then say: 'Switch him off! He knows nowt about it.' He only spoke one dialect—the 'home' dialect which was the first language he ever learned, and the last he had strength to utter—but he had a very accurate knowledge of the other English dialects, and when he found that he could not depend on the phonograph method he abandoned it, and collected the material for his Grammar through the ordinary means of written slips.

Meanwhile he was maturing plans for arranging the material in book form, as is shown by the following letter to Professor Holthausen:

*Oxford. March 12, 1902.*

We shall be in Oxford until April 5th, on which day we are going to Aberdeen, as the University there has passed a decree to confer upon me the degree of Doctor of Laws (LL.D.). . . . Had it not been that we must go to Aberdeen, we had intended to go to Germany for three weeks in April, as I should have liked to be able to discuss my plans about the Dialect Grammar with some of the Professors of English there. I have already made a draft scheme of the plan of the work which I hope to be able to carry out sometime next year. With the help of my wife and one of my best assistants, I think we can write the work for press in about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years, by sticking closely to it for that time.

In 1903 he issued a special appeal for voluntary workers. He explains his matured scheme to Professor Holthausen:

*Oxford. Oct. 1, 1903.*

I am now in a position to devote my whole time and energy to the Dialect Grammar. During the last ten years I have collected a vast amount of material for the purpose, it is however very far from being complete, so I have just compiled a list of the words of which I require the exact dialect pronunciation along with a phonetic alphabet. I am sending you a copy by book-post, and shall be very thankful to know whether there are any words missing which are phonologically important for the history of the literary language. Of course I can only include in my lists such words as can reasonably be expected to occur in some of the dialects. Furthermore, my alphabet is not quite ideal. At present I have not distinguished in it at least two sounds which are common in some parts of the country, namely the two short vowels *e* (mid front wide, lit. Engl. *bed*) and *è* (low front narrow, the short of the vowel which I write *æ* in my list of long vowels.) Again, I have not distinguished *o* . . . and *ò* . . . I want to make the phonology of the Grammar as accurate as possible, but it is necessary to distinguish at the very outset the difference between the *ideal*

and the *attainable*. I shall be very thankful for any suggestions. I have compiled from my present material a specimen page which will give you some idea of what the *index* to the Grammar will look like. The numbers after the *forms* as in *Find* and *Long* indicate the paragraph in the Grammar where the forms are treated. If I am able to carry out my plan in its full extent, the index alone ought to be a very valuable contribution to English philology.

Yours ever,

J. WRIGHT.

Mr. Nodal wrote a letter to the *Manchester City News* (Oct. 24, 1903) saying: 'He [Dr. Wright] desires me to appeal for some eight, ten, or a dozen competent and trustworthy helpers for these several Lancashire districts [North, North-east, East, and South Lancashire]. They will be required to act as correspondents only. Word lists, phonetic key, and blank slips will be forwarded to all who are willing to assist. A pamphlet containing instructions is already in type. . . . Dr. Wright writes me: "Linguistically Lancashire is one of the most important counties I shall have to deal with. It will be a thousand pities if I should fail to obtain the necessary co-operation to enable me to do justice to the Lancashire dialects." And then he adds, "Philologically it [the Grammar] is far more important than the Dictionary".'

Further stages in the work of compiling the Grammar are contained in two letters written at the beginning of 1904:

[To Professor Curtis.]

Jan. 5, 1904.

Many thanks for your kind postcard which I found on my return to Oxford this evening. As I was not able to find a competent person for East Somerset, I have been down there to collect the necessary material for the Grammar. I shall begin to prepare the index for press in a few days. . . .

I shall not issue the last volume [of the Dictionary] until the end of this year, because I like to keep the 'list of words kept

back for the want of further information' standing in type as long as possible on the chance of getting further information.

I am looking forward to the Grammar with enormous interest. . . .

[To Dr. Winternitz.]

*Jan. 7, 1904.*

. . . You will be interested to hear that I passed the last sheet of the Dictionary for press in September. I am now working vigorously at the Dialect Grammar for which I have collected a vast amount of material. In fact my rough material is so enormous that I shall have to make the Index to the grammar first, and then write the grammar *from* the Index, whilst it is standing in type. I had a short time ago a specimen of the Index set up to see what it will look like. I am sending you a copy by book-post. The Grammar will be a heavy piece of work, but like anything else it will get done in time—sometime next year! . . .

This index consisted of common English words, with tabulated pronunciations for all the various English dialects. In a prospectus issued after he had completed the whole Dictionary and its supplements, Joseph Wright stated that: 'the rough material for the Grammar consisted of over 500,000 slips, each containing a literary English word with its dialect pronunciation and district. Some idea of the labour involved in the compilation of the Index to the Grammar can be formed when it is stated that it contains 2,431 words, 15,924 dialect forms, and over 90,000 references to counties or parts of counties.'

In the summer he wrote again to Professor Holthausen:

*July 18, 1904.*

. . . I am working hard at the Index to the Grammar. I have now written it all out for press, except the words and forms which will have to be inserted from the grammar. The §§ in the Index from the grammar will be inserted after the grammar has been written. The Index will run to about 500 columns similar to the proofs which I am sending you per book-post.

Please do *not* return them. You will be able to form some idea of the vast amount of labour involved in this part of the work.

The bibliography of the Dial. Dictionary is now all printed off. I am having a few copies done up to give away to friends. I will send you a copy in a week or two, as you may possibly find it useful. . . .

And at the end of the year to Professor Curtis:

Dec. 8, 1904.

Many thanks for your Subscription for which I enclose herewith a receipt.

The remainder of the Dictionary including the supplement and bibliography will be issued next February! The Grammar will, all being well, be ready by about next August. It ought to be fairly easy to make a comprehensive linguistic atlas, but I must say goodbye to dialects after this next year, as I have been planning for years another big undertaking which I mean to carry out during the next 4 or 5 years. . . .

To conclude my account of the Dialect Grammar as a separate outgrowth of the Dictionary, cultivated and brought to maturity side by side with that great work, I may anticipate chronology and mention that the Grammar was presented to all the subscribers to the Dictionary, uniform with previous Parts; but it was also published separately in octavo form in September 1905. On the title-page the author repeated the motto he had taken for his *Windhill Dialect Grammar*: 'Nur das Beispiel führt zum Licht; Vieles Reden thut es nicht.'

The writing of the Preface was always his last word, in the case of all his books. I shall never forget an incident connected with this particular Preface. He had just finished the final 'thank you' paragraph when he called to me at my bureau to come and read through what he had written, and 'see if this will do'. I said: 'But you ought to include me!' He thought for a little while, pencil in hand, and then said: 'Here! You

write it. I don't know how to put it.' So I took the page to my bureau, and wrote this sentence: 'and in conclusion to my wife, the value of whose practical help and sympathy no words of mine can fitly express.' When I showed this to him I think we both experienced one of those 'fugitive moments' which Professor Gilbert Murray describes in his 'Introductory Essay' to *Euripides*. Certainly we neither of us perceived the subtle jest we were palming off on the general reader.

It was a great boon to philologists to have the scientific results of years of labour on the Dialect Dictionary all beautifully reaped and garnered in a handy volume. The book was reviewed in foreign philological journals as a treasury for all time, the importance of which could not be over-estimated. Professor Viëtor<sup>1</sup> wrote (in German) from Marburg, October 29, 1905: 'Herewith my warmest thanks for the pleasant surprise you have afforded me by sending me your Dialect Grammar. It is a simply splendid book! I should never have thought it possible for you to present so much material so lucidly, although when one knows your Dialect Dictionary one is entitled to expect a great deal. I regret that I was unable to make use of it in compiling my *Phonetik*.'

The *Guardian* (June 27, 1906) said: 'It is impossible to praise too highly the scientific care with which this grammar has been compiled; it must have cost enormous labour, but it can be used by the student with the minimum of trouble. We offer our hearty congratulations to Dr. Wright—few men have so great an achievement to their credit.' Professor Skeat emphasized the value of the work when writing to *Notes and Queries* (Aug. 10, 1907) in answer to a query concerning the pronunciation of the word *wound* (sb.) in East Anglia: 'I write this to point out that there is absolutely no need to discuss these things; for *the work has been done already*. No one ought even to dream of discussing such sounds until he has first of all referred to Dr. Wright's "English Dialect Grammar", in which *all* the sounds of *all* the dialects are tabulated and explained.

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English Philology at the University of Marburg.



It is a cruel thing to neglect so wonderful an achievement without even deigning to glance at it. It would save many pages of irrelevant talk.'

To return now to the publication of the Dictionary. As we have seen, Volume IV—M to Q—came out early in 1903; and at the rate of four Parts a year, Volume V—R to S—was in the subscribers' hands by the beginning of 1904. A letter from Crockett (Feb. 4, 1904) says: 'I am delighted to see you so near the end of your great task. It is a triumph of noble work—*delivered to date!* . . .' The *Manchester Guardian* (March 8, 1904) begins a long article with: 'Only one volume of Professor Wright's great work now remains to be published; indeed not quite so much, for the first part of Vol. VI, consisting of 184 pages and containing the words from T to Tommy, is already in the hands of the subscribers. There is no reason to doubt that the book will, as has been promised, be completed in the course of next year.'

The Parts containing the letters T to Z, with the Supplement and Bibliography, had all been issued by March 1905; and the Dialect Grammar—forming Parts XXIX and XXX—came out in September, thus completing the sixth and last volume of the English Dialect Dictionary.

'Those priceless six volumes of Wright's Dialect Dictionary'—thus did Mr. Baldwin refer to them in his speech at the dinner given to celebrate the completion of the Oxford Dictionary on June 6, 1928. I doubt if any words of praise ever gave greater pleasure to any author than did these to the author of the Dialect Dictionary, coming as they did when his strength was failing, and he knew he could never write another book.

There are over 5,000 pages in these six large quarto volumes, and an estimate of the contents reckoned up in figures is given in a later prospectus, which says: 'To furnish the exact statistics of the contents of each volume would involve an amount of labour wholly out of proportion to their usefulness. But it may be safely inferred from the statistics given below [of the contents of Volume I] that the Dictionary contains over

100,000 words, with about 500,000 quotations and references to glossaries, etc.'

Very soon after the Dictionary began to be issued, Professor Skeat advised the making of 'a small octavo one-volume *epitome* of the whole thing . . . If you don't do it, some one will', he wrote (Oct. 17, 1897). 'You ought to begin as soon as ever the great work is *half* done. Keep it a profound secret as long as you can. That's why it's best not to begin too soon. On the other hand, the epitome ought to be *absolutely ready* at least 6 months before the whole work is completed.' The Editor took the advice given, and this additional task was carried out quietly behind the scenes alongside of the main work, and finished ahead of it. The columns of the Dictionary were pasted singly on blank pages the same size as the Dictionary. The words and quotations to be retained, and those to be omitted were all marked, and the additions written in on the blank half of the page, '*absolutely ready*' for the printer. In this form the sheets were then neatly bound in 30 volumes for secure preservation. The Abridgement was, however, not published, since it was of the utmost importance first to sell out the original edition which had cost such a mint of money to produce. When the 'Workshop' had been closed for good, and Joseph Wright had his head full of plans for writing various Grammars, needs must he first compile a new prospectus, and throw his energies into pushing off the Dictionary—'Just completed in Six Volumes . . . bound in cloth', &c. A much later and more detailed prospectus in an account of 'How the Dictionary was made' estimates the cost of production at 'over £25,000'. This estimate was independently confirmed by Dr. John Johnson, the present Printer to the University. In a letter referring to the Dialect Dictionary he said:

*December 2, 1930.*

Many of us here still remember the various stages of this gigantic work which only a man as stout-hearted as Professor Wright . . . could have dreamed of undertaking.

We still have here a large room known as 'The Dialect Room' after the prolonged editorial and other labours which were undertaken in it. . . . If all contributory expenses were gathered together I do not believe that these would be found to fall a penny short of £25,000. I write this deliberately with my own knowledge of the cost of such similar enterprises as the Oxford English Dictionary, the Dictionary of National Biography, and others. . . . It is, as far as I know, the only enterprise in history of this magnitude the responsibilities of which have been undertaken single-handed by a Professor. But Professor Wright possessed an amazing tenacity and strength of purpose, which he brought with him from Yorkshire.

Notices in the public press, and letters from friends in England and on the Continent, extolled the value of the Dictionary and poured out congratulations on the author's achievement. *The Times Literary Supplement* (June 15, 1906) said: 'He has in this Dictionary completed a task of which not only he, but all English scholars may well be proud. No other nation possesses such a work, and Dr. Wright has not spared his own labour or his own resources.'

The general opinion of philologists abroad was expressed by Professor Hoops<sup>1</sup> in the Festschrift presented to Joseph Wright in 1925. He refers to the Dictionary as an inexhaustible treasure-house for everybody interested in dialects, whether scholar or no; and he also enumerates its outstanding merits from a scientific point of view—the systematic arrangement of the whole body of the material, the exactness of the detailed exposition, the phonetic transcription of various forms and pronunciations, the etymological information, the clearly defined typographical grouping—all of which 'make working with this Dictionary a pleasure'. In conclusion he adds: 'We cannot be grateful enough to Wright for this Work.'

As I began my record of the making of the English Dialect Dictionary with Joseph Wright's own words of grateful

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English Philology at Heidelberg.

recognition of his debt to Professor Skeat, I will here conclude it with the following letter, kindly sent to me by Miss Skeat:

*Thackley, 119 Banbury Road, Oxford. February 7, 1905.*

MY DEAR SKEAT,

You will be pleased to hear that the remaining portion of the Dictionary, the supplement, and bibliography are now being sent out, you will receive your two copies on Friday or Saturday. It's been a long and very heavy job, and was well worthy of all the toil devoted to it.

The present and all future generations will owe a deep debt of gratitude to you as being the father and real originator of a big Dialect Dictionary. If there had been no Skeat it is extremely doubtful whether we should ever have possessed such a work in this country.

With our kindest regards,

Yours ever,

J. WRIGHT.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LATER WORK

#### I. PUBLIC LECTURES

**D**URING the years of heavy editorial work Joseph Wright still found time to give lectures on the subject of the Dictionary, and even after its completion he occasionally delivered addresses setting forth the value of dialects. On September 17, 1898, he addressed a large gathering in Bradford at the annual meeting of the Yorkshire Dialect Society. In a letter to me (Sept. 18, 1898) he wrote:

... We had a grand meeting at Bradford last evening, but the heat was awful, and I did not speak for more than 50 minutes, so that the whole meeting was over in about 1½ hours. It is wonderful what a fascination dialect has for Yorkshire people, who came together from such long distances, some of them came farther than I had done! But the most interesting part came after the meeting. About 60-70 of us adjourned to the dining-room to a most sumptuous supper during which people got up and told capital stories in the dialect. . . .

On October 18, 1900, he was again in Bradford, when he delivered an address to the members of the Philosophical Society on 'The Philological and Ethnological Importance of English Dialects'.<sup>1</sup> This lecture was followed on October 22 by one given in Newcastle-on-Tyne to the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society. I remember this last occasion well, because of a little incident which altered the whole trend of his discourse. We were both staying with my brother in Newcastle, and met at dinner, just before the lecture, a friend of his who openly heaped scorn on dialect speech. He even declared that when playing golf in the neighbourhood he felt his caddie 'ought to be kicked' for speaking such a horrible tongue as the Northumbrian dialect. Joseph Wright had compiled some

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Bradford Observer*, Oct. 19, 1900.

learned notes for his lecture, but this remark at the dinner-table roused in him such an ardent desire to champion the cause of the unlettered rustic scoffed at by the pedant, that when the time to lecture came he stood up on the platform and without looking at the notes, hurled forth an impromptu speech on the richness, beauty, and humour of dialect hidden from the wise and prudent speakers of standard English. It lasted fully an hour and a half, kept his audience spellbound, and was probably one of the best public lectures he ever gave.

In 1901 he was made President of the Salt Schools, Shipley,<sup>1</sup> and he delivered the presidential address in the Victoria Hall on October 5, 1901. The Salt Schools Trust had been founded in 1877 by Sir Titus Salt. It provided an Institute, Technical Schools, a Boys' and a Girls' High School, and a Kindergarten at a cost in fees within the means of working-class people. The list of the yearly Presidents begins in 1877 with Professor Goldwin Smith, and contains the names of W. E. Forster, Mark Pattison, Sir John Lubbock, and other very well-known men. But on no one of them can the choice have more fitly fallen than on Joseph Wright, who had worked his way up from being a 'half-timer' in the Saltaire Mill, when, as he told his hearers, facilities for acquiring knowledge were very scanty. 'Thirty years ago', he told them, 'there was not a good night school in the whole of Shipley where a working man could learn anything beyond reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping,

<sup>1</sup> 'Shipley must have been poorly equipped even for the most elementary education of its youth, before the Education Act of 1870 was passed, but in the two Titus Salts, father and son, it possessed men of energy and enterprise, of foresight and understanding. Sir Titus had built a school for the children of his workpeople when he built his mills and houses for the workers. For the time this school was a remarkably fine building, adequate and well equipped for its purpose. It contained three Halls, one for Boys, one for Girls, and one for Infants. . . . In the first place, the Salt Schools were founded under the Endowed Schools Commission, they had their own Scheme and their own body of Governors. . . . With the exception of the Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday School, and the Albert Road Board Schools, every building in Saltaire had up to 1885, been built and paid for by Sir Titus Salt. The Institute and High Schools were his gift to the people of Shipley, held in trust by the Board of Governors.' (From *The Story of the Salt Girls' School for Fifty Years*, by Harriett Byles, Head Mistress, 1886-1920.)

and yet now in a little place like Windhill there was an excellent night school where students learned six languages.’<sup>1</sup>

The main portion of the address was naturally concerned with education—elementary, secondary, and University education—and a comparison of English and Continental systems. This led on to the value of the study of modern languages, especially from a philological standpoint, and so to ‘the comparative study of the modern dialects’. It was a great day. The hall was packed from end to end with men, women, and children, all hanging on the words of one whom they proudly felt belonged to them. When he came to illustrations drawn from his own and their dialect the place resounded with laughter and applause, for he knew the mind and heart of the people before him. In the middle of the front row below the platform on which he stood was his mother, with a look of radiant joy on her face, and tears in her eyes as she gazed upon her son in that her hour of bliss. Mr. Unwin, who afterwards seconded a vote of thanks to Joseph Wright, said he ‘congratulated her upon having such a son, just as he congratulated the son upon having such a mother (loud applause)’.<sup>2</sup> When the proceedings were over, people from Windhill and Thackley lined our way to the door, wishing just to shake hands with their hero; and as we drove away from the Hall, cheer after cheer followed us.

The daughter of Richard Brooks, the woolsorter under whom Joseph Wright was ‘prentice’, writing to me (March 24, 1931) said:

‘... Perhaps this will interest you. When Professor Wright gave the Presidential address at the Salt Schools Saltaire, he came straight off the platform to my Father, and said: “Nah Dick, lad, ha art ta?” I was pleased with the bit of Yorkshire, after the splendid speech we had just listened to.’

Another great day was the occasion of the opening of the Carnegie Free Library in Windhill, on January 6, 1906.<sup>3</sup> It was

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Shipley Express and Airedale News*, Oct. 11, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *Shipley Express and Airedale News*, Oct. 11, 1901.

<sup>3</sup> Vide ‘Windhill’s Red-letter Day’, *Shipley Times and Express*, Jan. 12, 1906.

formally opened by Mr. (now Sir) James Roberts, then owner of Saltaire Mill, and his address was followed by one given by Joseph Wright. Mr. Roberts introducing him said: 'We are proud of Professor Wright as a Yorkshireman, and proudest of all, because he is a Windhillian. I personally certainly feel proud of the fact that he used to work at the place where now I earn my daily bread.' In his speech Joseph Wright reminded his hearers that he had 'spent what were perhaps the hardest times of his life at Windhill', he told how 'thirty-five years ago he first began to learn to read', and went on to say: 'In spite of all the struggles he had gone through since then, he said unhesitatingly that he would face his whole life over again if he had the chance. (Loud applause.) The real pleasure in life was not derived from a position that was attained, so much as it was derived from the effort to attain that position. If a man attained his object in learning, or made a million pounds, his attainment became a mere matter of fact, and he cared not a "rap" about it. The real pleasures of life were, to his mind, derived from overcoming difficulties. As doubtless his hearers knew, he had had a good share of difficulties to overcome; in fact he was always overcoming difficulties. . . . He gladly approved of the great advancement in education and in libraries, but there was a danger that these things made learning too easy for us. There was nothing like having to make an effort for the acquisition of knowledge.'

When all the speeches and votes of thanks were over, we sat down to a real 'Yorkshire tea' with cold beef and ham, and endless cakes; indeed, a whole page of the programme giving the 'Order of Proceedings' is taken up with the 'menu' of the tea 'provided by the Chairman of the Council (Councillor Roberts) in the Lecture Room of the Library'.

On February 9, 1911, he once more spoke in the Victoria Hall, Saltaire.<sup>1</sup> His subject was 'Some Characteristics of the Yorkshire Dialect', and formed one of a series of lectures arranged by the Free Libraries Committee of the Shipley

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Shipley Times and Express*, Feb. 10, 1911.



District Council. He was again welcomed with great enthusiasm, and when replying to a vote of thanks after the lecture he said: 'The hearts of most Northcountrymen who went South remained in their own native place. It was only their heads which went away. Partly the reason why they did go to the South was that competition was not so keen there. There was more grit in Yorkshire and Lancashire than in almost all the counties of the South.'

Besides these addresses in Yorkshire and the North of England he gave a lecture in London on 'The Scientific Study of Dialects' at the Royal Institution, on March 31, 1905. Sir James Crichton-Browne (Treasurer and Vice-President) was in the Chair. In his introductory paragraph Joseph Wright quotes a story which he often quoted in connexion with this subject 'to illustrate the ordinary educated Englishman's ideas about a dialect':

'Having spent a great deal of time in writing an historical Grammar of my own village dialect, a copy of the book was sent to a distinguished classical scholar who regarded it as an elaborate philological joke, and regretted that so much valuable time should have been wasted in trying to reduce to system and order what were after all merely barbarisms, corruptions, and mispronunciations of the "Queen's English". . . . In the course of the lecture I hope to show that in reality it is the literary language which is full of irregularities, anomalies, and inconsistencies, and that there is a wonderful uniformity and regularity in the sound-system and grammar of the modern dialects.'

The lecture wound up with the following sentence: 'In conclusion it may be added that the scientific study of dialects not only advances knowledge, but it brings us face to face with the life and character of the British workman.'

The manuscript notes from which I have quoted these extracts are only a bare epitome of the whole lecture. As usual with him, the bulk of what he said was extempore. I remember at this meeting that quite a sensation was caused among the distinguished audience when they were told that in calling a

certain flowering shrub a *lilac*, they had borrowed their pronunciation of the word from the cockney who talked of a *lidy* [lady], and a *biby* [baby], but this item does not occur in the extant notes.

In a letter dated November 9, 1903, the President of the British Academy asked him to read a paper to the Fellows on some of the results of his investigations when working at the 'systematic Grammar of the English Dialects'. Doubtless Joseph Wright felt that his work was not sufficiently advanced for him to be able to 'formulate conclusions', and the project was deferred. He read a paper at a meeting of the Fellows held on January 31, 1906, the title of which was 'The Philological Value of English Dialects', but the paper was never printed.

• In looking back at these lectures and addresses delivered about thirty years ago, it is necessary to realize that much that could be said then concerning the purity of the sound-systems of English dialects is no longer true. The time of the standard-English speaking teacher has come this long while since, and now that the voice of the B.B.C. announcer is heard in our land in almost every cottage home, at the smithy, and in the bar of the village inn, the season of pure dialect is over and gone. I am told that in Joseph Wright's native place when the mother of a modern Board-school child uses a dialect word, the child says: 'Oh, mother, you *do* speak rude!' I confess it gave me satisfaction to learn that the mother retorts: 'Get along wi' ye!'

## II. HONOURS

In recognition of Joseph Wright's work as Editor of the Dialect Dictionary, several Universities conferred Degrees upon him during the years 1898 to 1906. The first to do so was Durham. Dean Kitchin<sup>1</sup> wrote:

*Deanery, Durham. 1 Feb. 1898.*

I am very much pleased at having to write and inform you that the University of Durham in Senate this afternoon voted

<sup>1</sup> The Very Rev. George W. Kitchin, D.D., Dean of Durham, and Warden of the University of Durham.

you an Honorary D.C.L. degree; as a token of their high appreciation of your work at the English language and its quickly perishing variations. . . .

Canon Fowler<sup>1</sup> also wrote the same day, adding to his announcement of the Degree:

‘[We] have gone out of our way to consider it at an unusual time, having understood from Prof. Skeat that it was of importance that you should have it as soon as possible in connexion with Gov<sup>t</sup> help for the E.D.D. . . . We would rather have had you at the principal Commemoration of the year, in June, but if time presses, you can come in March.’

The Degree was publicly announced forthwith, but it was actually conferred—as Canon Fowler had desired—at the Commemoration on June 21. A meeting about it, which Joseph Wright had to attend, was held on June 10. He wrote in letters to me:

*Windhill. June 11, 1898.*

The meeting last evening took about half an hour!! . . . Some day we must visit Durham together. I had not the least idea how very beautiful the castle is. So far as size and general ‘get up’ are concerned the hall is much finer than any we have in Oxford. They put me in what is called the Bishop’s room, which is big enough for many bedrooms. I felt quite lost in it. At dinner I found that the good hospitable people had arranged a grand breakfast party for 8.45. This ‘feed’ took up over an hour, and then I left to catch the 10.30 train, and arrived here just in time for dinner with my Mother and Tom. I think my Mother looks wonderfully well for her years. . . . Canon Fowler said it would be a pity to buy or hire a gown and hood, as he could lend me his, so I shall be spared that bit of expense. . . .

*Bishop Hatfield’s Hall, Durham. June 21, 1898.*

. . . I arrived here this morning at 10.30 [from Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he had spent one night with the Heslops] and paid

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Joseph T. Fowler, Vice-Principal of Bishop Hatfield’s Hall, Durham, and Hon. Canon of Durham.

an official visit to the Warden. The grand ceremony began at 2 o'clock, and the large hall was packed with all sorts of fine 'folk'. I don't know why, but the place of honour was given to your old man who was the first to be presented after a long speech by the public orator. It is a pity you could not be present, as I think it would have pleased you. . . . There is to be a big dinner this evening, and breakfast with Canon Fowler in the morning. . . .

In 1902 the University of Aberdeen made him an Hon. LL.D. We both went to the Graduation ceremony, which was held on the 10th of April. Professor Kennedy, in presenting Joseph Wright for the Degree, said:

'I think that by general consent Dr. Joseph Wright stands in the front rank of living philologists, for his knowledge of scientific principles and the thoroughness and breadth of his investigation into details. . . . But the great monument of research with which Professor Wright's name and fame and labours will always be associated is his great dictionary on English dialects. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

We met with a warm welcome in Aberdeen, and were treated with the kindest of hospitality, though the cloud of sorrow which descended upon us a few days later, in the sudden loss of our only boy, has dimmed the happy memories of that visit.

On June 29, 1904, Joseph Wright was elected Fellow of the British Academy. On October 7 of the same year he received the Degree of Hon. LL.D. of the University of Leeds. On July 3, 1906, he was made Hon. Litt.D. of Dublin University. To conclude this list, I will here quote one of my own letters from Dublin to our Mary (aged 8) at home, because it seems to carry a reflection of the simplicity with which Joseph Wright received the honours showered upon him:

*Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. July 3, 1906.*

I have read your letter several times, I liked it so much. Dada had a red gown with bright blue sleeves, when he took

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Aberdeen Free Press*, Friday, April 11, 1902.

his Degree. It looked very grand. He had to stand up in it whilst a man made a speech telling how learned Dada was, and how he had made the Dictionary, and then everybody clapped and shouted. After all the Degrees had been given, we went to the big Luncheon party. I send you the paper which shows how we sat, only you must not lose it, as I shall like to keep it. Then Dada and I came home and took off our best clothes, and went a long ride on top of the electric tram, nine miles out, nearly all the way by the sea, and where we stopped at the end, there was lovely sand for ever such a long way. We kept saying 'What a pity Mary is not here'. You would have wanted to paddle I am sure, and you would like the electric tram because it goes so quick when it is not in a crowded street. I spent the sixpence you gave me in postcards, which I shall bring home with me. . . .

At the beginning of 1901 he was elected full Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford,<sup>1</sup> in succession to Max Müller who died in October 1900. When collecting testimonials for his candidature he wrote to Dr. Winternitz:

Nov. 5, 1900.

The Professorship is now vacant through the death of Max Müller whose deputy I have been for *ten years*. The election to the Professorship will be made very shortly, and I shall be very thankful indeed if you will kindly bring your *old* testimonial up to date. . . . I ought to have a good chance of obtaining the Professorship if hard work counts for much. I have now finished the letter L of the Dictionary, which is more than one half of the work. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Concerning this election Sir Charles Firth kindly sends me the following introductory paragraph: 'Joseph Wright had been Max Müller's Deputy for ten years, but in Oxford the position of a Deputy is somewhat precarious. It is a temporary appointment, and does not necessarily imply that its holder is promoted to the Professorship when the chair becomes vacant. A fresh election takes place. Scholars who did not offer themselves for the Deputyship come forward as candidates for the Professorship, and there may be changes too in the composition of the board of electors. Max Müller died on October 28, 1900, and the election of his successor did not take place till the latter part of the following February. Hence for nearly four months Joseph Wright's future was uncertain.'

He mustered a still more formidable array of testimonials than those with which he obtained the Deputy-Professorship in 1891, for since then his fame as a philologist had been strengthened by his 'monumental work the *English Dialect Dictionary*' (Dr. Winternitz), and by his success as a teacher of his subject in Oxford. Dr. Peter Giles said:

[*Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Nov. 15, 1900.*]

'... He has written admirable little manuals for the study of Gothic, Old High German and Middle High German. He has produced the most elaborate and scientific work on a local dialect which has ever appeared in this country. Above all, at his own charges, he has undertaken and carried on to the complete satisfaction of the best judges, the publication of the *English Dialect Dictionary*, a work which if not undertaken in this generation could never have been done at all, and which, in all probability, would not have been undertaken but for Dr. Wright's energy and self-sacrifice. ...'

Professor Lundell<sup>1</sup> said:

[*Upsala. Nov. 19, 1900.*]

'... Of the four great dialect dictionaries which are at present in course of publication, viz. *Schweizerisches Idioticon*, the *Alsatian Dictionary*, Feilberg's *Jutish Dictionary*, and your *English Dialect Dictionary*, yours will be the largest and most comprehensive. ... By your *Dialect Dictionary* you are rendering an invaluable service to English philology and to your country; and even though the number of those who are able to fully appreciate the significance of your work be not at present very large, future generations will without doubt be deeply grateful to you. ... The study of the dialects of one language is, in my opinion, the very best way for arriving at a correct judgement on the phonetic, inflexional, semasiological and other facts in the history of the Indo-European languages in general. ...'

Dr. James Murray said:

'... In the course of my work at the *English Dictionary*, I have

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Slavonic Philology at the University of Upsala.

had innumerable occasions to confer with and consult Dr. Wright on questions connected with the ulterior etymology of English words, involving points in Germanic, Latin, Greek, Iranic, and Sanskrit. . . . I have no hesitation in saying that I know no Englishman of equal eminence as a Comparative Philologist, and it has been of inestimable value to my work to have the benefit of his help. . . .’ In his concluding paragraph, Dr. Murray added: ‘he has for a decade of years performed as Deputy much more than the statutory duties of the Professor. . . .’

‘The Principals of the Oxford Women’s Colleges in a combined testimonial wrote of his work as a teacher for the A.E.W., ‘during the last thirteen years’: ‘. . . It is to him that the organization of the class-work and private tuition is in its origin due. His teaching is excellent, and is inspired by a vigour and vitality due to his own living interest in the Science of Language. He possesses in a remarkable degree the power of exposition and of rousing the enthusiasm he himself feels. . . .’

Dr. Brauholtz,<sup>1</sup> who had ‘repeatedly examined’ together with him in the Cambridge Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos, said it was ‘a pleasure for his colleagues to work with him’. And he added: ‘We have naturally often discussed general principles and details of linguistic study and dialectology. On such occasions I was always much struck by the soundness of Dr. Wright’s views and his power of clear and convincing exposition, to which, combined with his inspiring enthusiasm, he evidently owes his well-known efficiency and success as an academic teacher. . . .’

The time pending the election was, however, not without anxiety, for Joseph Wright had set his heart on this well-merited distinction, and we knew there was active hostility in the field. He wrote to Dr. Winternitz:

*Feb. 20, 1901.*

. . . I am naturally very glad that the election is over: All’s well that ends well! I shall now be able to give up all drudgery

<sup>1</sup> Reader in Romance at the University of Cambridge.

work and devote myself entirely to *the* subject. One thing is quite certain, viz. I have lost absolutely all faith in testimonials! With the exception of Joh. Schmidt—whom I don't know—I had testimonials from every Prof. of Comp. Philology in *Europe*. I had nearly 40 first-rate testimonials, yet I verily believe that one or two of the electors had—without ever reading my application—definitely made up their minds to keep me out of the post at all cost. . . . Put not your faith in man!

### III. FIRST SERIES OF GRAMMARS

When the Dictionary was done and the 'Workshop' had been closed for good, Joseph Wright said at first that he felt 'quite lost', or 'like a stuck sheep'. He missed the Dictionary as if it had been a friend from whom he was sad to part, but he was not really at a loss for future work, for as we have seen from his letter to Professor Curtis (Dec. 8, 1904), he had 'been planning for years another big undertaking'. This was to be a new series of Grammars for teaching purposes, and constituted a programme of work which would occupy many years.

We were now—at the end of 1905—well settled down in our new house, with the big study built to hold the additional library which he had accumulated in the 'Workshop'. He used to say: 'You can't write a book unless you *live* with your subject'; even when neither reading in his arm-chair, nor sitting at his writing-table, pen in hand, his mind was working all the time. He had wonderful powers of sustained concentration on his work. And then, too, he often said that 'the subconscious mind' solved a problem which had been puzzling him. He would read up and think out everything available connected with the knotty point in question, and then go to bed pondering on what he had absorbed during the day. Next morning he would tell me that his difficulty had vanished—'the real explanation is as clear as daylight'.

He collected the material for his Grammar on slips—smaller than the E.D.D. slips—and, being innately thrifty, he used them twice over, i.e. one side for the first book, and the other



side for the next. When he had collected his material, he wrote out a rough draft in pencil, using for this the backs of circulars, letters, business reports, &c. of foolscap size. He liked to boast that he had 'written three books on the backs of testimonials' sent in for the Librarianship of the Taylor Institution in 1921. This was perfectly true, for there were about 150 candidates, and as Joseph Wright was Secretary to the Curators he had a large supply of copies from each one. He never destroyed clean half-sheets of note-paper. He tore them off the letters he received, and they were kept for use in composing paragraphs for a Grammar, or for outlining important memoranda for a committee. There was no need for the finished copy of any of his books to be typed; his manuscript for press was all carefully written in his own hand: every word, and every letter—including phonetic script—clear, regular, and legible. He said it saved money, and I believe he thereby reduced the cost of proof-corrections to a minimum. Even in the case of the Dialect Dictionary this was a comparatively small item for a work of its kind, because he insisted on clearness of handwriting, as well as general accuracy of material. He had a critical eye for printer's type, and knew exactly what he required for paradigms, meanings, derivations, &c., in his Grammars. He liked me to read his finished copy, and I could help to prepare it for press by doing what we called the 'scriggling', which meant the zigzag underlining of words of a certain category, as a guide to the printer. He added my name to his on the title-page of the English Grammars, but properly speaking I was not an author, only a hewer of wood and drawer of water. I collected the plain substance which he shaped into law and order. I never mastered all the English and German books and articles which he read, learned, and inwardly digested before he set about a new Grammar. To wade through the N.E.D.<sup>1</sup> for the life-history of every English strong verb was a lengthy but easy business, such as I could manage; moreover, like

<sup>1</sup> The New English Dictionary is now commonly called The Oxford Dictionary.

knitting, it could be taken up or laid aside if domestic interruptions supervened. Nevertheless, I was always conscious of the intellectual atmosphere of the study. I could correct my pupils' papers the better because he was there working in the same room. In later years, when he was ill, and forced to be idle, I was aware of loss of zeal and inspiration. He never knew what it was to have a headache, and never had to consider his eyesight, although from the time he first learned to read he spent more hours of the twenty-four over books than is possible to most men. He took to spectacles only because he was very long-sighted; his eyes were unusually strong, and they altered very little with age, so little that the same spectacles would last for fifteen years without change. His powers of work were not affected by climate. When people complained that 'the Oxford air is so relaxing', he would say: 'I've done more work than most people, and I've done most of it in Oxford.'

His first publication after the completion of the *Dialect Dictionary* was a second edition of the *Old High German Primer*, in June 1906. 'The new edition', the Preface stated, 'has been carefully revised and brought up to date. The part dealing with the phonology has been almost entirely rewritten.' This was a trifle by the way, for all his energies were now devoted to the 'Students' Series of Historical and Comparative Grammars'. The first one of the series—his *Historical German Grammar*—came out in April 1907. According to the scheme as issued by him to the general public: 'The object of this series is to furnish students interested in Historical and Comparative Grammar with handy volumes on the subject. The general editor has already secured the co-operation of several of the leading philologists in England, Germany, and America; and it is confidently expected that during the present year authors will have been secured for the whole series, consisting of about twenty-five volumes.'

In view of other contributors, the German Grammar was entitled Volume I, for Volume II on Syntax had been undertaken by another author. As far as I know, the only volumes

of the proposed series which ever saw daylight are those which Joseph Wright himself continued to produce as the result of incessant hard work. In the Preface he says:

'I was unable to develop this scheme whilst working at the English Dialect Dictionary; but now that I am free from those labours, I am able to devote my whole time and energy to the furtherance of the project. . . . A glance at the Index of over 4,000 words will show that I have not shirked the drudgery of collecting large numbers of examples to illustrate the sound-laws in the different periods of the language, and more especially those in the modern period.'

The book was cordially welcomed by teachers and philologists at home and abroad. 'The work is masterly throughout . . . it does honour to English scholarship.'<sup>1</sup> Otto Siepmann wrote:

*May 24, 1907.* Allow me to congratulate you on your new undertaking. . . . You are doing a great national service which I hope will be appreciated widely. Your Eng. Dialect Dictionary and Grammar have already put students of English under great obligation to you, and now you are going to help those who take an interest in the scientific study of language, which I cannot but think will do much towards removing from the minds of many educated Englishmen the stupid notion—as though Modern Languages were not worth learning but for utilitarian purposes.

I hope to introduce your Historical German Grammar in the top set at Clifton College. . . .

Professor Kluge wrote (in German):

*Freiburg. 27.v.07.* Accept my hearty thanks for your fine book. I envy not merely your good health, but also your tremendous power of work which accomplishes so much. Your thorough and comprehensive grasp of the material, the convincing and lucid treatment of the subject, give promise of further valuable information in the works to follow.

<sup>1</sup> *Educational Times*, July 1907.

Professor Horn wrote (in German):

*Giessen.* 6.vi.07. . . . Your compatriots must be grateful to you for this excellent book which lays before them all the important points in a clear, concise, well-arranged, and interesting manner. The publication of a series of scientific grammars is an enterprise which will greatly advance philological studies in England—and outside England! I look forward eagerly to the continuation of the series.

In 1908 appeared the *Old English Grammar*, the second of the series. In the Preface Joseph Wright said:

‘. . . Although this Grammar makes no pretence of being an exhaustive work, yet it is by far the most complete Grammar that has hitherto been written in our own language, and the first to deal with the subject in a strictly scientific manner. . . . In selecting examples to illustrate the sound-laws we have tried as far as possible to give words which have been preserved in Modern English. . . . Our object in doing this was to enable the student to lay a solid foundation for his further study of historical English grammar. . . .’

He wrote of it to Professor Curtis:

*Jan. 12, 1908.*

You will be interested to hear that the OE. Grammar has just been published. I am sending you a copy by book post for your kind acceptance. After looking it through I think you will find that it is just the book needed by students who wish to study OE. from a scientific point of view. . . .

*Jan. 21, 1908.*

Pray accept our heartiest thanks for your very kind letter. We are delighted to hear that you think the book is what your men require. The reason why many textbooks are a failure is due to the simple fact that the writers of them are always thinking what their colleagues and specialists will say; but we kept only the learner in view.

I have sent you today 8 copies of the OE. Grammar and two copies of the Hist. German Grammar. . . . I have sent already

hundreds of the Hist. Germ. Grammar to students at the different German Universities, because it too seems to meet with the requirements of young students. . . .

The ME. Grammar will be done by my wife and myself. At present I am working hard at the Comparative Greek Grammar which I hope to finish at the end of this year.

The salary offered by the Akademie is first-rate for a young man, and I think you ought to be able to find one easily. I shall make enquiry here among the professors and lecturers for a young man who has taken the English Hon. School here. . . .

In connexion with the concluding paragraph in the above letter, I quote another written shortly afterwards, because together they afford proof of the way he took any opportunity he could for furthering the interests of the individual student on leaving the University:

*Feb. 10, 1908.*

. . . I have just had a note from the Secretary of the Oxford University Appointments Committee saying that they will try to find a suitable man for your 'lektorship'. Please let me know whether you definitely intend to appoint a man for the *Summer Semester*. You ought to be able to get a really first-class man for the £175 a year. . . .

I may also add here, that in 1926 he secured University Lektorships in Germany for two young men—pupils of mine—who had just taken their final examination in English, and were starting out in life as teachers.

The *Old English Grammar*, like its predecessor, was well received. A review in the *Guardian* (April 29, 1908) said: 'The student who thoroughly masters the book will also have gained in a delightfully easy and pleasant manner the elements of comparative Germanic grammar. The volume contains in a compact form the results of what has been acquired by the learned labours of the "young grammarians" during the last forty years. It is quite clear to any one who reads the book that it has been planned by one who is not only a master of the

subject on which he treats, but who has great experience in the art of teaching. . . . We heartily recommend the book; it supplies a demand that has been long felt.'

Two years later (Jan. 1910), he published his *Grammar of the Gothic Language*. In the Preface he stated:

'It was originally intended that this Grammar should form one of the volumes of the Students' Series of Comparative and Historical Grammars, but some time ago I was informed by the Delegates of the Clarendon Press that a third edition of my Gothic Primer was required. It then became a question whether it would be better to issue the Primer in a revised form, or to set to work at once to write the present Grammar. I laid the two alternatives before the Delegates, and they preferred to accept the latter.'

The *Glasgow Herald* said of the new book (April 7, 1910): 'Many students will give this book a hearty welcome. Since 1892 Professor Wright's "Primer of the Gothic Language" has done excellent service; it now makes way for something better still. . . .'

This was followed in January 1912 by a *Comparative Grammar of the Greek Language*, the third volume in the Students' Series. He had begun to prepare this book many years before, as we have seen from letters<sup>1</sup> previously quoted in this record, but had laid it aside for the more pressing work of the Dialect Dictionary.

Writing to Professor Curtis he said:

Jan. 2, 1912.

Many thanks for your postcard. I have given instructions for the five copies of the Old English Grammar . . . to be sent to your Seminar by parcel post.

The next book to appear in the Series will be: Comparative Grammar of the Greek Language which is now being bound and will be published in a week or so. I am now working hard at a similar book dealing with Latin which I hope to finish this year, and then all being well I shall return to English again.

<sup>1</sup> Vide letter to me, Dec. 3, 1892; and to Prof. Holthausen, Feb. 23, 1893.

The Series does not make the progress I intended. It is very difficult to find people willing to undergo the necessary drudgery for the writing of the various Grammars. . . .

He again makes it clear in his Preface that this book, like its predecessors, 'is not intended for specialists'. A review in the *Scotsman* (Jan. 15, 1912) said: 'Written upon the same general plan as the other grammars in this valuable series, it sets out in a lucid and concise exposition an account of the grammar of Greek, which gives a student a good grounding also in the elements of the Sanskrit, Latin, and Germanic languages. It is an excellent grammar for those who wish to approach the study of Greek as an avenue to broad philological learning.'

The *School World* (August 1912) said: 'The indefatigable Dr. Wright has produced another of his indispensable books, and very good it is.'

At the beginning of 1914 he brought out a second edition of the *Old English Grammar* of 1908. A letter to Professor Curtis told of its completion:

Dec. 21, 1913.

I have at last finished the new Edition of the Old English Grammar, and am sending you a copy by this post with the compliments of the season. The book has been thoroughly revised throughout, and I hope it will continue to serve the same purpose in its new form as it did in the old. . . . Now that this book is off my hands I shall be able to return to the Comparative Latin Grammar which I have already written as far as the beginning of the verb. . . .

In the Preface to this new edition he expressed his disappointment that other scholars had failed to collaborate with him in his projected 'Students' Series':

' . . . We are painfully conscious of the non-fulfilment of the two promises made in the preface to the first edition, viz. that the Middle English Grammar and the volume on historical English syntax would follow within a comparatively short space of time, but unfortunately there is even now no reason to

suppose that a single line of either of these books has ever been written. The same remarks also apply to the long promised Old French Grammar, Historical French Grammar, Historical German Syntax, and the volume on Comparative Greek Syntax. The simple fact is that most people in this country who are competent to undertake such work either cannot or will not face the drudgery which it entails.'

This Latin Grammar, at which he was 'working hard' in January 1912, he very nearly completed, even to writing out most of it in final manuscript for the printer, but it was never published. First of all the exigencies of the War-time involved him in manifold other duties; and later it was put aside for the three English Grammars he produced in 1923-4. He did return to it, but illness overtook him before the last pages were written. During the War years his only publication was a third edition of the *Middle High German Primer* in 1917. In the Preface (dated Oct. 1916) he said:

'When the first edition appeared twenty-eight years ago, there were very few students in this country who took up the serious study of the older periods of the various Germanic languages at the Universities. In late years, however, the interest in the study of these languages has grown so much that Honour Courses and Examinations in them have been established at all our Universities. The result is that a book even intended for beginners can now reasonably be expected to be of a higher standard than the previous editions of this Primer. The grammatical introduction has accordingly been entirely rewritten and expanded to more than twice its original size. The texts have also been nearly doubled. . . .

'May the new edition of the Primer continue to further the study of the subject in the future to the same extent as it has done in the past!'

In 1913 he was incorporated among the founders of the Indogermanic Society in Germany. The illuminated diploma certifying his enrolment—'auf Grund seiner hochherzigen Förderung der Gesellschaft'—is dated Leipzig, December 27,



1913, and is signed by Professors Brugmann, Wackernagel,<sup>1</sup> Streitberg, and Thumb.

#### IV. WAR-TIME AND ILLNESS

Oxford is held by some to be a place where the residents sit comfortably in academic arm-chairs and think about the ancient classics; or if they walk outside at all, it is along old ruts of tradition. They are even supposed to uphold this conservative frame of mind themselves:

Then J. A. S. of B . . .  
A mighty oath he swore,  
That nothing that hath never been  
Should ever be no more.<sup>2</sup>

Then there is the legend of the academic ghost. I own I like to quote the story of his loyal adherence to old times. He walks up and down the College library with no feet visible. And why so? The reason is this: within recent years—in ghostly chronology—a new floor was laid some inches above the level of the old one. The ghost ignored it, and went on pacing up and down with his feet on the old floor. Nevertheless, when the War came, few places showed the changed order so much in so short a time. It was inevitable that undergraduates and young dons should go. In their stead, Colleges were filled with cadets and airmen training for the front, and whilom playing-fields resounded with the shouts of drill-sergeants. The Examination Schools, Somerville College, and the Town Hall were turned into hospitals. The unwonted sight in the street was now the academic gown. The undergraduate element was represented by a few swarthy young men from distant climes. Most significant of all was perhaps the sight of dons and their wives tilling allotment gardens in the precious precincts of College Meadows, and of septuagenarian scholars planting potatoes in the Parks.

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Comparative Philology at Göttingen University.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *The Oxford Magazine*, Dec. 5, 1906.

One Sunday afternoon in September 1914 a number of wounded Germans were brought to Oxford and taken to the Examination Schools for hospital treatment. So unexpected was this invasion that the authorities found themselves in a dilemma: nobody either on the military or medical staff could speak German. Then some friend in need suggested sending for Joseph Wright, and a motor containing a hospital official was quickly dispatched to our house. Hearing that we had just gone out for a walk, the motorist pursued and overtook us. Joseph Wright was forthwith press-ganged in the public highway, and carried off to the Schools to act as interpreter. Doctors and nurses were dealing with the worst cases, and now Joseph Wright had to help by explaining to them the less obvious needs of the others. After this beginning he went daily to the hospital, not only as an intermediary, but as a friend and comforter. He initiated the forming of a lending library of light German books; he collected German-speaking friends as visitors; he bought chocolates, cigarettes, braces, pocket-combs, &c., for distribution. Unfortunately, after a time, the hospital authorities began to think that he was showing too kindly a spirit towards the enemy—or else they grew jealous of his popularity. I am not clear what the reason was—and he soon saw that his presence was unwelcome to the powers that were, and he gave up his visits. He had been the moving spirit in organizing what he thought necessary for the welfare of the men, and now, as subsequently under an infinitely more bitter disappointment, he retired quietly and calmly. He had done a good work for the benefit of others, any hurt that he now felt could be borne in silence. The men did not forget his fatherly kindness, and later he received various letters from internment camps whither they had been drafted when convalescent. Some of the letters perhaps show traces of cupboard love, remembering him rather for the gifts than the grace, but that is only natural. The writers were a mixed multitude, judging from the variety of callings they followed in the Fatherland whence they came. I have a list of all their names,

addresses, and vocations. It may be of interest to give here a few specimens of these letters—I translate the German:

*Newbury. 14 Nov. 1914.*

On behalf of all my comrades I herewith thank you right heartily for all the kindness you showed us in the Oxford hospital. We were extremely sorry that the last part of the time you could no longer visit us. We would gladly have all thanked you personally. There are now only three of our comrades in Oxford. We are all well here in Newbury, and hope you also—Herr Professor—are well. With greetings from all of us comrades, yours respectfully and gratefully. . . .

This card is signed by four men, and one dated November 15 is signed by sixteen 'in grateful remembrance.' Later they sent him a group photograph bearing all their respective signatures. An 'Oberkellner' [a head waiter] wrote from Dorchester:

*Nov. 23, 1914.* I think very often of you and the time when you did me and my comrades the honour of visiting us, and provided us with comforts. The Herr Professor will be glad to know that all goes well with us here. We hope our Oxford comrades will soon be fit to travel, we are keeping a nice little room for them. We have a concert every night, also talk, gymnastics, and English lessons, and so we spend ~~our~~ days. We miss the tobacco, unfortunately. We often sing the beautiful song *Stumpfsinn du mein Vergnügen*, u.s.w. [Dullness thou my pleasure, &c.]. . . . We all send our best thanks for the card we received from you.

More than two years later Joseph Wright received a second letter from this same man.

*S.S. Scotian. Portsmouth. 16.12.16.* As a former inmate of the hospital in Oxford allow me to send to you and your esteemed family best wishes for a merry Christmas. We are no longer at Newbury, but are here in harbour, where we are quartered in a passenger steamer. Herr Professor, may I ask a small favour, would you be so good as to send me a note-

book, for which I will repay you. We cannot here go on shore to make purchases. I shall ever remember gratefully your kindness and goodness, and remain with best thanks in anticipation,

your OSCAR BAUER.

Also will you, if possible, send me 50 quite cheap cigars, at a penny each, or 30 at twopence, to be paid for on receipt.

*S.S. Scotian, Portsmouth. 27.12.14.* On receiving your kind parcel I found it was delivered to me gratis. Then came your esteemed letter, and I learned from it that the parcel was intended as a Christmas<sup>e</sup> present. Accept now, dear Herr Professor, herewith our heartiest thanks for having provided us with this pleasure.

Joseph Wright continued to receive letters of this kind. I have several of various dates in 1915. Some were from a German Officers' Camp at Bray, near Maidenhead. One good-looking young man sent his photograph, with an English inscription: 'In remembrance to your faithfully Henry Meier.' A lithographic printer wrote from Jersey, reminding the 'Herr Professor' that he had encouraged them to start learning English, and asking him for some easy lesson-books and a German-English dictionary. At the end he put a postscript: 'Perhaps you would add a few picture postcards, a packet of playing-cards, and some writing materials.' On February 15, 1917, Joseph Wright received from the station-master at the Oxford G.W.R. station the following: 'Dear Sir, The enclosed letter was thrown out of a train with German prisoners today, and I am sending it to you herewith.' The letter was written in pencil on a leaf torn from a cheap account-book, and came with a translation made by the railway officials: 'To Professor Wright. Oxford. Allow me in haste herewith to write you just a few words. We come from the Jersey Camp and are going to the Frongoch Camp, North Wales. I send you my best greetings. Yours Robert Semmler. Paul Weber' [a head

waiter, and a wheelwright]. The latest missive from these men is a postcard from Rotterdam:

*January 20, 1918.*

I have been interned in Holland since the 13th. I feel I must thank you, Herr Professor, for the goodness and kindness you showed me in the hospital. I shall always think of it, and hope that you and also your esteemed family are well, and may remain so in the future.

With many greetings, your grateful W. KIEBSCH.

Joseph Wright refers to his intercourse with these soldiers in Oxford in a letter he wrote to the mother of a young German Lecturer, who in 1914 was obliged to give up his post at the Taylorian and go back to serve his country. Knowing Joseph Wright's kind friendship towards her son, the mother had written to tell him of the young man's death in March 1915. I found that Joseph Wright had kept a rough copy of his reply:

DEAR MRS. SCHELLENBERG,

Pray accept our most heartfelt sympathy in the loss of your dear son Otto, who had deservedly endeared himself to a large circle of friends during his stay in Oxford. We know and feel but too well what his untimely death must mean to you and his relations, and I can assure you that all who knew him here will deeply mourn his death as that of a dear friend, a <sup>loyal</sup> ~~royal~~ colleague, and a noble character. He was undoubtedly one of the most popular lecturers amongst the undergraduates that we have ever had at the Taylor Institution. It is now the vacation, but when our students come back and learn that Otto has sacrificed his life in the cause of his fatherland in this all-devastating and terrible war, they too will mourn his loss along with the rest of his numerous friends. All Otto's books and other belongings are being carefully preserved and will be sent to you as soon as it is possible to forward goods direct to Germany.

It is dreadful to think of what this war in the end will mean to all the countries concerned: untold loss of valuable lives and

property, unheard-of misery and poverty, all of which, in my opinion, might easily have been avoided. The only possible consolation may be that when the war is over we may all come to know and understand each other better, and to realize each other's aspirations with a clearer vision and a purer heart.

I should, dear Mrs. Schellenberg, deem it a great kindness if you could inform the Crecelius family, as well as our old friend Dr. Kölbing in Freiburg that we often think and speak of the happy hours we have spent with them in the past, and look forward with fervent hopes of spending many more with them in the future. You may take my word for it, there is not, there never was, and I do not believe there ever will be that strong national feeling against the German people, which I see from time to time depicted in some German papers. As an illustration of the absence of such feeling I may mention the following: At the beginning of September, 57 wounded Germans arrived in Oxford and were taken to the hospital. They were from the very beginning treated just the same as our own wounded. We at once formed for them a German library of over 400 volumes besides innumerable German illustrated periodicals. I and many other people visited them every day during the whole of their stay at Oxford. They were all protestants except one, and we had a German Pastor from London every Sunday for Gottesdienst for them, and the one Roman Catholic had a priest to see him nearly every day. We provided them with an ample daily supply of cigars, cigarettes, pipes, tobacco, chocolates, etc. and when the time came for them to leave Oxford we and they equally felt the parting as that of dear old friends.

As time went on, those whose business it is to deal with University finance foresaw serious difficulty. Something must be done to make up for the lack of fees from freshmen, the lack of degree and examination fees, &c., now that the numbers of students were so reduced. One plan was this: if a Professor died or resigned, his successor was not appointed; instead,

some other benevolent elderly Professor took on the work voluntarily, in addition to his own. I believe during the War years about nine chairs fell vacant, and the saving to the University Chest must have restored it to equanimity if not affluence. Professor Napier, the first Professor of English Language and Literature in Oxford, died on May 10, 1916, and in order to avoid a break in the continuity of the teaching of a subject in which he was specially interested, Joseph Wright took it on his own shoulders. I have before me a list of the lectures and classes he held in connexion with the English Honours School from 1916 to 1919, amounting to six hours a week—in the Summer Term of 1919 to eight hours—on from three to five different subjects in the week. He lectured during those years on Historical English Grammar, Comparative Grammar of the Germanic Languages, Phonetics, Shakespeare's Language, the Foreign Element in English; he held classes in Gothic, Old English Phonology and Accidence, Old English Translation, Middle English Grammar, and Translation of prescribed texts. As he had not done this work for many years he was hard-pressed for time. No sooner was one class over than he had straightway to prepare for the next. He spent all his vacations writing the courses of lectures. He took enormous trouble over these, collecting material, and arranging it as scientifically as if he were writing a book. He prepared tables to illustrate vowel-changes for the Historical Grammar courses, and had them printed in pamphlet form; and for the Shakespeare course he had a facsimile made of a couple of pages from the 1st Folio of the Plays, showing the original spelling. The lectures on Historical Grammar afterwards formed the foundation of the series of Elementary Grammars which he produced in 1923-4. The Women's Colleges were still full. He had from 60 to 100 women at his lectures.

He also helped with the German Honours and Pass Schools in the place of young Lecturers gone to the War. The students attending some of these German classes showed their apprecia-

tion of his efforts on their behalf by presenting him with a magnificent azalea in a pot. It was a source of pleasure to him to see this plant every spring covered with blossom, and he was genuinely sorry when it perished some ten years later. When Mr. Diddams, the Clerk to the Curators of the Taylor Institution, went off for War service, Joseph Wright, who was already Secretary, took on the Clerk's duties as well. In a letter to his old friend the woolsorter, Richard Brooks—Secretary to the Shipley Veterans' Association—he wrote:

*January 24, 1915.* Dear Dick, I am very pleased to see from your kind letter that in spite of this wretched war, you are going to have your annual tea and concert. I wish the average age of the veterans was less by 40 years or more, and then some of them would be able to help in the struggle. Alas! I too shall be 60 in a few months, but fortunately there are many ways in which I can be of some help although I cannot fight. Oxford is like a military town, it is full of students who are preparing to go to the front. . . .

Though he speaks thus lightly of what he was doing to help, all this additional work was a great strain, and it had to be borne at a time when food was insufficient and bad. The food restrictions in Oxford, especially during the later years of the War, were more severe than in remoter parts of the country. The bread containing maize and beans was gritty and indigestible, and nourishing foodstuffs were scarce—small wonder that a man even with the iron constitution of Joseph Wright should ere long show signs of wear and tear. It was only in his native county that he fared well. At Settle in the war-time there was no shortage of meat or butter, and there were no beans in the bread. Indeed, the bread made with its usual admixture of milk and lard was as white as ever. There was more food than was actually necessary for the diminished population of the place, yet not a sufficient surplus to be worth collecting by Government Food Controllers. People were being asked by the farmers to buy 10 lb. of butter to salt down



for the winter, and there was the usual supply of cakes on the table when we were asked out to tea. On one occasion when we had tea in the home of a local personage, I counted twenty-two plates of cake, pastry, and bread and butter of various sorts. When I went to the butcher with my ration card for four ounces of meat, he offered me a whole leg of lamb. However, we could not remain sitting by the flesh-pots and eating bread to the full in Settle, and the lean fare in Oxford grew worse rather than better. Joseph Wright was fond of saying that he could digest bones if he could swallow them, but now for the first time in his life gastric trouble started. He frequently suffered acute pain, and his weight—up to then about sixteen stone—went down considerably. He never indulged in self-pity or complaint, rather he learned to say: 'It is astonishing how accustomed one can become to pain', and still feeling strong and vigorous, he would say philosophically: 'It is a good thing sometimes to be reminded that one is mortal.' Meanwhile he went on working as hard as ever, with little or no relaxation. Doctors continued to treat him for accidental ills, without looking for a common cause for recurring attacks, and a reason for his having lost five or six stone in weight.

In the summer of 1919 one of these gastric attacks occurred when we were at Settle, and we sent for the landlady's family doctor, Dr. Middlemiss. He only saw Joseph Wright three times, but before we left, when the latter was once more striding at will over his native hills, Dr. Middlemiss said: 'I don't want to be an alarmist, but I think you have a duodenal ulcer.' His diagnosis proved correct, though nobody had previously made it, and fresh doctors on our return to Oxford took some months to arrive at a like opinion. In January 1920 they sent us to Leeds to see Sir Berkeley Moynihan. The great man stood grandly on the hearthrug of his consulting room and said: 'You must have an operation at once.' It was a severe shock to us both, with nothing to mitigate its sudden impact, but Joseph Wright took no heed of that, and proceeded to explain that as he was responsible for University business

he must be allowed to go home first, to arrange matters in view of a prolonged absence. We had only come prepared to be away two nights, meaning to be back in Oxford ready for Term and our respective teaching immediately afterwards. We would do what we could provisionally, and return to Leeds in a few days. The surgeon raised no objection, and we departed. We were staying with Professor George Gordon—now President of Magdalen College—and his wife. Joseph Wright was rather better than of late, and able to discuss with his host schemes for the organization of the teaching of English Language at Leeds University. His experience as a teacher, and his capacity for sound business, being of great help to the younger scholar. Next morning we started home, by train from Leeds to Leicester, where we were to change stations. Shortly before we were due to arrive at Leicester, Joseph Wright said the compartment was too hot, and he asked me to open the window wider. I made him lie down on the seat, and he seemed to feel better. When the train stopped and he stood up, I noticed that he looked very ill, and I called to a porter to give him an arm and help him down on to the platform. Another official came too, and I saw Joseph Wright faint in their arms, but only momentarily, for he managed to walk with their help across the platform to a bench. Then came an awful hæmorrhage. As soon as he could open his mouth for speech he remarked, with the satisfaction of one who had at last solved a scientific problem: 'Then it *was* an ulcer!' That was all he said. I supported him as best I could, and wrapped a rug round his shoulders, for he was now in the deathly perspiration of collapse. A kindly guard, who had been helping me to send off some telegrams, said his train was now due, and he must leave us. At this Joseph Wright roused himself to bid me 'give the man a shilling', and on his refusal to take it added: 'Nay, lad, but you must have it.' Aided by the porters, I then got him on to a sofa in a deserted and dismal waiting-room, where we stayed for what seemed an eternity of time before an ambulance arrived. We both thought it was the end,

and Joseph Wright was calmly giving me final instructions about his books and legacies, quite shortly and simply, with no fuss or anxiety. At last the ambulance came. I remember the station-master in full uniform, with brand new gloves, escorting us, as—with Joseph Wright on a stretcher—we marched down the long platform to where the van was in readiness to drive us to the Royal Infirmary.<sup>1</sup> Never can I be thankful enough to that station-master for sending us to a public hospital instead of to a Nursing Home! A 'Side Ward' attached to the 'George Oliver Ward' was vacant, and there Joseph Wright was put to bed with all speed. I stayed there that night, till the immediate danger was past, and on the morrow I engaged a foothold in a neighbouring boarding-house. The Ward Sister allowed me to spend all my days at the hospital, so that I saw very little of the other boarders. I left before the ladies were downstairs in the morning, and their after-dinner chatter about food and raiment drove me early to bed at night. They seemed to be victims of the housing problem, and even the proprietress of the establishment deplored their lack of occupation. The husbands at the early breakfast-table looked more purposeful. I only remember one of them with any distinctness. I asked him what kind of a dog it was that he possessed, and when he said it was 'a black and tan' I suddenly realized that mine was a very silly question. I ought to have known without asking. I continued my porridge in silence, for I had not meant to be personal. I was always yearning for the company of our MacGregor, eating his heart out at home. One evening I found two spaniels waiting outside the boarding-house door. I sat

<sup>1</sup> The exact date has since been given me by Mr. Johnson, the House Governor and Secretary of the Leicester Royal Infirmary. Sept. 11, 1931: 'It is a great pleasure to me to respond to the enquiry contained in your letter of the 10th instant, and to inform you that Professor Wright was admitted to this Hospital on the 17th January 1920 and was able to leave on the 2nd March. I remember his admission quite well, and I remember that Dr. Astley Clarke and Dr. F. C. Gladstone, who was at that time House Physician, were very pleased to become thus associated with your husband, and many occasions subsequently in which they spoke of his erudition and specialised knowledge notwithstanding his ill-health and suffering.'

down on the mat between them, and they understood everything. Spaniels are so sympathetic. Normally they ask one to hold their hands, but these didn't, they held mine—in spirit—and I went to bed much cheered. It was like a bad dream to find myself pitchforked out of my Oxford surroundings into the crowded streets of an industrial city, pacing daily from a boarding-house to a hospital. We remained seven weeks in Leicester. When Joseph Wright left, he said he had 'never had one unhappy moment'. Everything that human skill and attention could do was done for him. The Leicester Royal Infirmary is justly famous for its nursing, and our Sister Oke was one of those who are nurses born—like true musicians and artists—to their vocation. I knew that Joseph Wright was under watchful care every minute of the day and night. Not the tiniest detail escaped the Sister's vigilant eye, and her touch in the rearrangement of pillows was like magic. Joseph Wright, for his part, accepted everything with the utmost tranquillity, and slowly but surely his condition improved day by day. Before long he had won the heart of every single person who came in contact with him, and others hearing of him took means to gain access to his Ward. A nurse who was late in attending to a patient in the general Ward would be greeted with: 'You've been talking to your Professor! *I* know.' From the Matron to the Ward-scrubber they all confided in him and sought his advice. One and all felt he was their particular friend to whom could be told the private troubles or petty grievances which no superior or subordinate ear must ever hear. 'I 'avn't told the Sister yet, but I'm going to leave. I can't stop 'ere, it's too sad, it reminds me of my pore 'usband', said the Ward-scrubber one morning, drying her eyes on the corner of her apron. 'The Professor' would surely understand and sympathize. Once two young nurses came and stood at the foot of his bed, in hot argument over a question of a Ward rule, and the right of a senior nurse to chide the junior for allowing a breach of rule; 'The Professor' would see the matter in its true light and they were prepared to abide by his judgement.

Even the Porter paid him an official visit in all the glory of his gold buttons proclaiming the fact that he belonged to the Royal Infirmary. He looked so august that one would rather have supposed the Royal Infirmary belonged to him. He entered the Ward, carrying a minute parcel which had come by post, as his card of introduction to the Professor of Comparative Philology. He had 'always been interested in the subject' himself, and now felt that the hour and the man had come, and he could at last unbosom his intellectual being to an understanding mind. In the evenings, after I had retired to my hostelry, the young house-physician would come and have long talks with his patient. Joseph Wright has often said that he longed to write 'The History of a Gastric Ulcer, by the Victim', but having begged the doctor to lend him various volumes on medical lore, he read so much about the human interior that he said he was no longer clear as to which symptoms he had experienced and which he had only read about in books. Hence this interesting work never saw daylight. The visiting physician held long consultations with him on the subject of the new Leicester University, and received much practical and wise advice. As soon as Joseph Wright was fit for a short motor-drive, his friend took him to see the building and land already bought for the promotion of sound learning in Leicester. The chaplain's visits were short and hurried. He slipped into the Ward furtively, and seemed to tremble lest, despite his unespied entrance, the Sister might yet hear his voice and come and order him out again. He was very benevolent, but too loquacious, and the Sister found that he tired her patient, and so she headed him off whenever she saw him approach the 'Side Ward'.

Whilst we were in Leicester, there occurred one of those chance meetings which cause people to utter trite remarks about the smallness of the world. Joseph Wright was now well enough to have his hair cut. The Sister would not allow him to have the ordinary barber who regularly practised in her Ward. 'The Professor' must have some superior person all to

himself. I was therefore sent into the town to find an exalted hairdresser, patronized by the nobility if not by royalty. I sought out the best street in Leicester, walked into a shop, and proffered my errand to the stylish gentleman on the other side of the counter. It was a shock to him to be asked to attend anybody in the Infirmary, so I had to give details of all the circumstances. It turned out that this man's father used to cut Joseph Wright's hair at Margate in the days when the latter was a schoolmaster there and patronized the barber employed by the school. When Joseph Wright came to Oxford some few years later, he discovered that the Margate barber had also come to reside here, and he again became his customer. The son, then a small boy, used to see 'the Professor' coming into his father's shop, and remembered him as a familiar figure.

Few hospital patients can ever have had such a send-off as did Joseph Wright when he left the Royal Infirmary. Thankful as we were to be able to return home, we could not help being sorry to say good-bye to so many friends who had shown to us both such unstinted kindness. Not only had they been the means of restoring Joseph Wright to comparative health and strength, but they had enabled him to find in what might have been just a long stretch of weariness a time he could look back upon with unalloyed content. As the Leicester Infirmary was not normally open to paying patients, the authorities would not accept any fees, but Joseph Wright insisted on giving them a donation of £50, whereby he became a Life Governor. As the medical treatment had so far been quite successful, it was hoped that by following the same régime of diet at home, and by leading as quiet a life as possible, complete recovery might be attained without an operation. But this was not to be. Within a few weeks former symptoms began to reappear, and he was steadily losing weight. Joseph Wright remained unperturbed, but I lived in constant suspense. I knew that some of the doctors believed that an operation was the only possible cure, yet I clung to the theory that it might be avoided, especially as I knew that the patient was optimistically on the side

of medical treatment. By the end of May our own doctor said quite definitely that an operation was absolutely necessary, and that, moreover, without delay. Joseph Wright said: 'You are all obsessed by the idea of an operation. I *must* have an unbiassed opinion on the subject before I consent.' So a London physician—Sir John Charlton Briscoe, Bart.—was sent for to discuss the case with an 'unbiassed' mind. He came, and saw, and was conquered. He told Joseph Wright that without surgical aid he must henceforth lead the life of an invalid, and that even so, the malady might develop into something much more serious, and perhaps fatal. Joseph Wright was convinced. He agreed forthwith to remain in bed for the next ten days, and then submit to the operation, here, in Oxford, for it was now quite out of the question that he could travel to Leeds. The weather was warm and sunny. He lay propped up in his bed by the open bay window, writing letters and addressing envelopes for circulars on behalf of the Taylorian Extension Fund for hours each day. Professor George E. MacLean, who was in England at the time, wrote in his reply to this appeal, on May 31: 'Mrs. MacLean and I did so enjoy our glimpse of you and Mrs. Wright. We came hoping to cheer you, but per contra you cheered us.' A friend in South Africa, writing in 1928 some reminiscences of him, said: '. . . Neither shall I forget a Goodbye we said once when he was sitting up in bed pulling at a pipe, and in his big strong cheery voice keeping everybody in good heart, though the next day he was to have an operation that might lead to what we dare not think.' Kind friends wrote wishing him good speed, with helpful sympathy. Sir Charles Firth said: 'One comfort your friends have, namely that your patience, and cheerfulness, and fortitude, which we have all observed during your illness, will help your recovery, and diminish our anxiety about you a little, though we shall all feel anxious till we see you about again.' The President of Trinity—then Vice-Chancellor—wrote: 'The University simply cannot do without your undiminished activities.'

On June 10, the day before that fixed for the operation, he

was taken to the Nursing Home. So calm was his frame of mind that his pulse did not register one beat above its usual pace, even after the disturbance of the transit. It was a long and serious business, but when the surgeon—Dr. F. F. Burgard—came downstairs to me afterwards, he looked thoroughly happy, and he greeted me with the comforting words: ‘You need have *no* further anxieties.’ The operation took place on a Friday, and on the Sunday following Joseph Wright was smoking a cigarette and reading the newspaper. He was only away three weeks, for as soon as it was possible to remove him in an ambulance, I was anxious to get him back home. I had turned the drawing-room into a hospital ward, and our young friend Olive Barnes—the most gifted nurse I have ever known—was here with me, waiting to minister to his comfort and well-being. He had made up his mind to get well, and he progressed rapidly. Before long he was able to take up some of his correspondence. He wrote to Professor Curtis:

*July 28, 1920.*

I was very pleased to receive your letter of last December and your letter the other day. I have been very ill for nearly a year and unable to attend to correspondence. Six weeks ago I underwent a serious operation in a nursing home and there is now every prospect that I shall gradually be restored to my old health and strength. I am now able to be up several hours a day, and to go out into the garden when it is fine.

I am very sorry to hear that you too have been out of sorts, but I do not wonder at it. Judging from all one hears the conditions of life in Germany must be dreadful. I do wish we could find a suitable post for you in this country. . . . The Professorship of English has just become vacant at Liverpool through the appointment of Professor Wyld to the Merton Professorship here.

Mental exertion still tires me, so I must conclude with our kindest regards,

J. WRIGHT.



The next question was where to take him when convalescent? Yorkshire was too far away, so was our other favourite refuge, Sidmouth in Devonshire. A hotel would be quite unsuitable. Some salubrious spot near Oxford must be found, and nice rooms where an invalid, with a wife and a dog, could be taken in and done for according to his requirements. Fortune favoured us. At Mrs. Treweeke's farm in the village of Churchill, about twenty-seven miles from Oxford, we found all and more than we could have pictured even in our wildest dreams. It was a large manor-house, built of stone, with big lofty rooms, beautifully furnished. The farm buildings were a little away from the house, so that we were not even disturbed by the voices of hens or pigs. Joseph Wright spent his days lying on an old-fashioned horsehair sofa in the garden, drinking in strength with the bracing air of the Cotswold hills. It was a lovely garden, quiet and spacious, where Joseph Wright on his sofa, and I sitting beside him, basked in the morning sunshine. On one side of us was a brilliant herbaceous border, and on the other, the lawn, flanked by pillars of rambler roses, under which would be sleeping our good companion MacGregor. I always think of that garden when I hear the call of the wood-pigeon. There must have been scores of them in the clump of trees at the far end of the lawn, crying all day long: 'My toe *bleeds*, Betty! My toe *bleeds*, Betty. Look!' This is what the Oxfordshire wood-pigeon says, according to local tradition, and it is certainly nearer the sound than any other version I know. In Galsworthy's *Swan Song* they are reputed to coo: 'Take *two* cows, David!' which is not so near the mark as the more common interpretation: 'Steal *two* cows, Taffy'; but neither of these versions accounts for the monosyllabic note at the finish of the repeated longer phrase, which is so aptly rendered by the Oxfordshire 'Look!' Besides, the plaintive tone of the bird's cry suggests a call for sympathy in distress rather than an incitement to theft. Within doors we fared sumptuously every day, for Mrs. Treweeke and her daughters were specialists in the art of cooking, and farm produce of the very best was

lavished upon us with unsparing kindness. No Convalescent Home in the kingdom could have done half so well in restoring strength to the invalid. Before our stay came to an end, he could walk five miles with actual enjoyment. He was so taken with the district, and the fine old stone houses of the village, that he contemplated going to live there when he retired. However, before the time for retirement came, he had decided that he should never want to leave Oxford. 'I mean to die in Oxford', he often said. 'I like to go to Yorkshire for a holiday, but I don't want to go back there to *live*. I shall stay here.'

Only one incident disturbed the tranquillity of our life at Churchill all that warm September. We were spending the morning as usual in the garden, when suddenly I heard shouts and screams for help coming from the direction of the farm-yard. I ran quickly to see what was the matter, and found Mrs. Treweeke and the young maid wringing their hands in despair. A hefty calf had thrust its head between the bars of a gate, and could not get it back. All the farm men were some distance away in a corn-field, there was nobody within earshot. The calf was alternately making vigorous efforts to free its head and falling exhausted to the ground, in imminent danger of breaking its neck by the fall. Mrs. Treweeke stood by lamenting: 'It will kill itself! It is dead! And it's the best one of the lot! What *shall* I do?' The maid looked on with a helpless stare. Presently Joseph Wright appeared on the scene: 'Fetch me a hammer', he said to the girl. As soon as he got his weapon, he began hacking at the imprisoning bar with masterly strokes. In a few moments the calf, with one desperate lunge backwards, broke the bar loose, and released its head, whilst Joseph Wright, thrown off his feet by the creature's sudden movement, lay in a welter of soft mud. The stream of Mrs. Treweeke's lamentations was now diverted into another channel. She had no heart for rejoicing over the safety of her best calf, so overwhelmed was she with anxiety for 'the Professor'—'and just after his operation too!' He was undoubtedly shaken by the fall, and overheated by the previous exertion. We hurried

him to bed, and kept him quiet for the rest of the day, and mercifully he was none the worse for his heroic exploit. Indeed, he was gratified to find that he had regained sufficient energy to take an active part in an emergency, and be of service to other people.

#### V. LATER SERIES OF GRAMMARS

For some months yet he had to be content with a life of retirement. He had undergone what is called in medical parlance a 'major operation', and though health and strength were steadily gaining ground, he realized that it was prudent to let Nature take her own time over the business. Meanwhile he made use of the opportunity for reading books which had been crowded out by his special subject. In the Michaelmas Term of 1921 he resumed his Gothic classes at the Taylor Institution, but he still refrained from attempting to write. Towards the middle of 1922, however, the old yearning for hard work came back, and after his usual August holiday in Yorkshire he began a new series of Grammars: the trilogy for beginners, viz. *Elementary Old English*, *Elementary Middle English*, and *Elementary Historical New English Grammar*. The first one of the set was issued early in 1923. In the Preface (dated Feb. 1923) he said: 'This Elementary Old English Grammar is in a great measure an abridgement of our larger work on the subject. In order to render the book more suitable for beginners we have omitted many philological details both in the phonology and the accidence. On the other hand some new details have been embodied, and the whole material has been considerably rearranged.' Professor Studer,<sup>1</sup> writing from Switzerland, said:

*March 18, 1923.* It was a real pleasure to read your last letter and the very hopeful news concerning the state of your health. Many thanks also for the interesting details. . . . My congratulations on the completion of your latest work, undertaken amid such great difficulties. It is another triumph of mind over matter, and testifies to the unimpaired condition of your energy and will-power.

<sup>1</sup> Taylorian Professor of Romance Languages at Oxford.

Before the first book was actually published, the *Elementary Middle English Grammar* was well on its way, for it, too, came out that year. Its Preface is dated October 1923. This book bears the following dedication:

'To the revered memory of Dr. Henry Bradley and Dr. Sir James Murray who devoted their long and strenuous lives to promoting the study of English word-lore this Middle English Grammar is respectfully dedicated.'

He sent gift copies of both books to the Professors of English Language in this country and in Germany, and received many letters of thanks and praise. Professor Hoops wrote:

Nov. 11, 1923.

• It is a most welcome gift indeed, as it is actually the first complete M.E. Grammar of real scholarly value. . . . You deserve the gratitude of all 'Anglists' for having tackled this difficult task and successfully carried it out. At last I have a book on the subject that I can recommend to my students as being written by authors of fullest competence. The book will be a valuable help both to professors and students. If only it could be brought within the possible reach of our students: the price of 7/- corresponds to the enormous sum of over a billion marks!

I admire you for the never relaxing energy with which you continue your philological work in spite of illness and all. I am afraid I can hardly do any research work at present besides the lectures, as the continual, never-ceasing strain of the sorrows of daily life takes up all time and strength! How I am longing for some quiet hours of uninterrupted study! . . .

Professor Horn<sup>1</sup> wrote (in German):

Dec. 29, 1923. My best thanks for the handsome Christmas present. Both your Grammars are practical, well-arranged, admirable text-books, which will certainly promote the study of the older periods of English. I am specially pleased with the

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English Philology at Giessen.



Elementary Middle English Grammar, for it fills up a gap I have often felt in University teaching. . . . Your words of sympathy for my tortured Fatherland did me much good. I hope that the New Year will bring us some improvement.

Professor Keller<sup>1</sup> wrote:

Nov. 12, 1923. I must thank you most cordially for the copy of your Middle English Grammar, which you had the kindness to forward to me. I think it a most splendid thing for students and simply excellent from a paedagogic standpoint. I have recommended the book to my pupils, and should like to take *thirty copies*. . . .

The Preface to the *Middle English Grammar* (dated Oct. 1923) pointed to the next one of the series:

'In order that the book may form a kind of basis for the modern English period, we have in almost all cases chosen the examples illustrating the Middle English sound-changes from words which have survived in Modern English. It will thus link up with a similar book dealing with the phonology and inflexions of New English, which is already in an advanced stage of preparation, and which will be published next year.'

This book—the *New English Grammar*—appeared duly at the end of 1924. He had devoted special time and thought to the section on orthography, considering it to be a subject hitherto neglected by grammarians, and he was justly proud of it when it was finished. I remember I wrote the bit of the Preface which should draw the attention of reviewers to the value of this part of the work. It was a maxim of his: 'Always put in the Preface what you want the reviewer to say.' My little endeavour was certainly successful, and Joseph Wright had his meed of praise. *Notes and Queries* (Jan. 17, 1925) said: 'The most generally interesting chapter in this able little work . . . is that on orthography and pronunciation'; and the *Cambridge Review* (May 1, 1925) said: 'The section on Orthography calls for especial mention as an excellent summary of the subject.'

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English at Münster.

He had found the study of English orthography so thrilling that he hoped to return to it in greater detail at some future date. Further, he had in mind the constructing of a fourth book of the type of this set, to be entitled *Historical English Grammar*. It was to combine the essential elements of the previous three books, leaving aside in each period of the language as far as possible all side-issues and problematic questions, and concentrating on the sounds, inflexions, and native vocabulary which are the basis of living standard English. Indeed, he went so far as to say in the Preface to the *New English Grammar*:

‘In this volume, just as in the previous ones, we have designedly excluded word-formation, because it was considered that the subject could be dealt with more appropriately in our forthcoming *Historical English Grammar*, which will presumably be published by the end of next year.’ It is unfortunate that his health did not permit him to accomplish this; with his genius for seeing the wood the more clearly for his knowledge of the individual trees, the fourth volume would not have been a mere boiling down of the previous three, but a bird’s-eye view of the general principles underlying our English language as spoken to-day.

The following letters to Professor Holthausen explain the plan Joseph Wright followed for enabling German students to avail themselves of his books. He had taken it up again with increased benevolence after the War had made book-buying in Germany a very serious difficulty for University students. The plan was—and still is—greatly appreciated.

119 Banbury Road, Oxford. Sep. 18, 1924.

I do not know whether you have yet seen the Elementary M.E. Grammar which was published at the end of last year, I am therefore sending you a presentation copy by book-post. When you have had an opportunity to look through the Grammar and then think that it will be useful to your students, I shall be pleased to supply you with any number of copies at

a specially reduced price. I fully realize that many of your students cannot afford to pay the full published price, I have therefore made arrangements for copies to be supplied to German students at 4/6 a copy including the cost of transit, provided that all orders are sent direct to me from a German University Professor of English.

119 *Banbury Road, Oxford. Nov. 4, 1924.*

Pray accept my heartiest thanks for kindly sending me your analysis of the Windhill Dialect. If I should live to bring out a new edition of the book I shall find it very useful, and failing that I will have it bound up with a copy of the Grammar and deposited in the Bodleian Library, as the analysis is too valuable to be lost sight of by future dialect students.

I have just received today some copies of the Elem. Historical N.E. Grammar, and have great pleasure in sending you one by book-post. When you come to examine the book I think you will agree that we have managed to get within a modest compass all that a student, who has no intention of becoming a specialist in the subject, can reasonably be expected to get into his head. On p. 149 (near the bottom of the page) of your analysis of the Windhill Gr. you give Napier's and Bülbring's suggested explanations of the *ea* in the preterite of our First Class of strong verbs, and you also suggest one in addition, but if you refer to § 338 of the Elem. N.E. Gr. which I am sending you by book-post, I think you will find the correct explanation. . . . Although I am now in my 70th year, and have had a hard life, especially in the earlier part of it, I still hope to be able to get through a fair amount of work before I am laid aside. I am now naturally obliged to take some care of myself since I had a serious operation in 1920, but in spite of that for a long time back I have been able to work solidly for 50-60 hours a week without being run down or feeling tired. And in order to have more leisure for work I am thinking seriously of resigning my Professorship at the end of the year.

You too must now be getting on in years, but I do hope that

you may long be spared to continue your valuable contributions to English Scholarship for many years yet.

If after examining the Elem. N.E. Grammar you should think that it will be useful to your students, I shall be pleased to make arrangements for you to be supplied with any number of copies at the specially reduced price. . . .

119 *Banbury Road, Oxford.* Nov. 21, 1924.

We are very pleased to hear that you think the Elem. Hist. N.E. Grammar will be useful to your students. . . . I am very pleased to hear that Prof. Jordan's M.E. Grammar will soon be published. There is no fear of the two Grammars coming into conflict, as ours is merely intended for young students who have no intention of becoming specialists in M.E.

There seems to be a general *Verschiebung* of Anglistic Professors going on just now in Germany. Max Förster is going to München, and Dibelius to Berlin, but unfortunately Luick is thought to be too old to go to Bonn. As you will see from the enclosed, I have definitely decided to retire at the end of the year on what I cannot help but regard as an adequate pension, which will keep both of us free from financial worries for the rest of our lives. .

I think your explanation of O.H.G. *desēr*, etc. is probably right. By referring to the Engl. Dial. Gr. p. 277 you will see that *this here* and *that there* are in gen. dial. use in England. I envy you the practically unbroken ground you have taken up in regard to Frisian. I am quite sure you will very soon find that you are tilling a most fruitful soil which will yield splendid results. There is an enormous amount still to be done in dialectology in most Germanic countries, and if I were a younger man—with plenty of leisure—I should devote all my spare time and energies to English dialects.

. . . When I publish a book or grammar I always make special arrangements for the privilege of supplying German Professors with copies for their students at a specially reduced price, and this has been customary for over 20 years. Before



the wretched war enormous numbers of my books went to Germany, and they are now beginning to go again in considerable numbers to the various Universities. . . .

Early in 1925 he brought out a third edition of the large *Old English Grammar*, first published in 1908:

119 *Banbury Road, Oxford. Feb. 24, 1925.*

As you will see by the number of 'Tit Bits' which I am sending you by book-post, I have now resigned my Professorship, and shall henceforth be able to devote all my time to my own private work. I do hope you are making steady progress with your book on English dialects which will be very useful both to your and our young students at the Universities. Since last October I have been very busy preparing and seeing through the press a new revised and somewhat enlarged edition of the O.E. Grammar, the last sheet of which I have just sent to the press. The new edition will be published in a few weeks from now, and I shall, of course, send you a copy as soon as the book is out. . . .

In a letter to his friend Mr. Charles Wade (dated Feb. 9, 1925)—which I shall give in full in my last and more personal chapter dealing with declining years—Joseph Wright said that though he had just resigned his Professorship, he meant to use his freedom from academic duties for fresh work in his own study: 'It is my intention to write a series of historical and philological grammars of various languages to serve as textbooks for the younger generation of University students.'

The three following letters to Professor Holthausen show how manfully he strove to pursue this endeavour, fighting to the very last against oncoming bodily weakness:

119 *Banbury Road, Oxford. Oct. 5, 1925.*

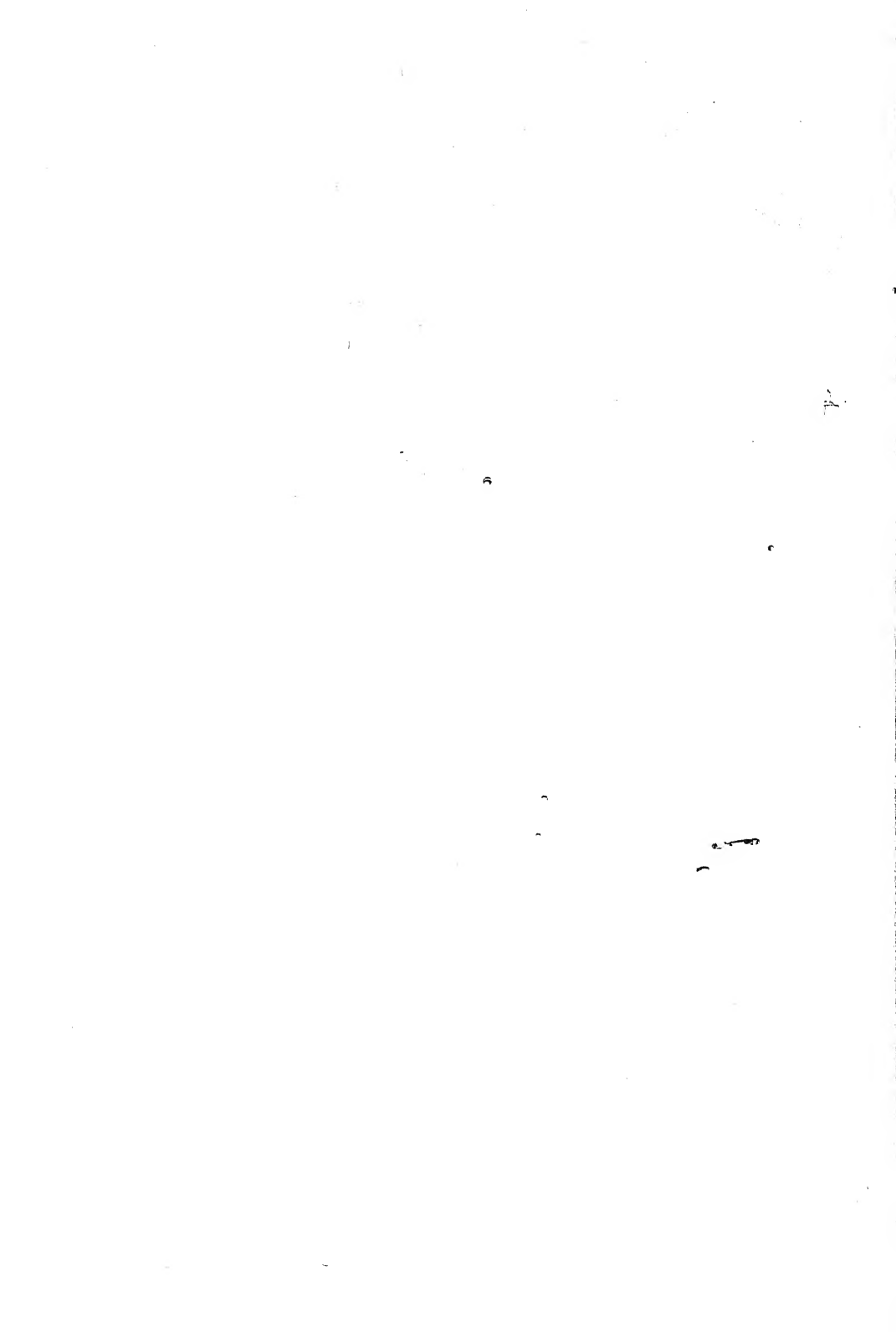
Pray accept my heartiest thanks for your kind congratulations and wishes upon my 70th birthday, which, however, is not until the 31st of this month. We are gradually getting together a vast amount of material for our next book, but unfortunately



*(Photo Press)*

JOSEPH WRIGHT IN HIS STUDY

1925



I had a slight stroke some months ago which has left me with a certain amount of giddiness from time to time. I am, however, assured by the doctors that this giddiness will gradually pass away. Anyhow I am able to do a fair amount of work, and this is the most important thing.

I had no idea that you were about to retire so soon from your University work. I feel sure that you will long continue to furnish Scholars and students alike with the results of your long investigations. And I do hope you will now be able to finish your O.E. etym. Dictionary which will be a boon to Scholars. You will find it much easier to get through plenty of work when you no longer are required to write new lectures, at least that was my experience. It used to take me a dreadful long time to write a good set of lectures. My advice to you is to be careful not to cut yourself off entirely from the younger generation, if you want to remain to feel young yourself. We always have in Term time young people to tea with us, and we always feel the better for it.

What an enormous change there is amongst the Anglisten in Germany! It must be difficult to find suitable men to fill up all the vacant chairs. Three chairs are now also vacant for Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft. I am very sorry to hear about Jordan's death. I could see he was far from being well when he wrote to me in the Spring of this year at the time he sent me a copy of the first part of his M.E. Grammar. I wonder who will succeed Schröer at Köln. I suppose Schücking will decline the offer from Köln and will go to Leipzig.

They appointed my successor last March, viz. Professor Braunholtz who is I am very thankful to say a first-rate Scholar and a kind of man who will easily make friends here. They have also just lately appointed a new Professor of Anglo-Saxon here.<sup>1</sup>

119 Banbury Road, Oxford. May 19, 1926.

I was very pleased to receive your postcard telling me all about your work. It is really wonderful how you manage to get

<sup>1</sup> Professor J. R. R. Tolkien.

through so much, because like me you are no longer a 'chicken' as the saying is. Your O.E. etymological dictionary will be of immense use to Scholars. . . .

I have been suffering from a severe attack of asthma and bronchitis, which for some reason or other has left me with giddiness, with the result that I have not been able to do much serious work. Up to then I was writing a long chapter on Stress in Modern English. From the amount of material I have got together, I am convinced that much of what is called Stress in longer words is not a question of Stress but of Intonation. . . .

*Oxford. June 27, 1926.*

. . . By way of a change of work I am just now working through all the reviews of the M.E. Grammar, and have found yours most useful and helpful. . . .

At the end of 1927 he completed a second edition of the Middle English Grammar. Many paragraphs were enlarged, and some entirely rewritten, the chapter on verbs being specially enriched by much new material.

Professor Harting<sup>1</sup> kindly sent me some letters which were written by Joseph Wright to him between 1925 and 1928, and from them I quote the following extracts:.

*Oxford. May 13, 1925.*

Many thanks for kindly sending me a copy of your Inaugural Lecture which I have read with great interest and profit. In recent years there has undoubtedly been a gradual falling off of the number of persons in this country interested in the serious study of the history of the language, and of O.E. and M.E. literature, but in the course of time I think the study of these things will revive again, especially when we get a larger number of suitable textbooks for our students. It is my intention to spend the rest of my days in furthering the cause. The three Elementary Grammars: O.E., M.E., and N.E. are already beginning to produce some little effect, if the steady sale of these books can be taken as a criterion. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English Language and Literature at Groningen.

*Oxford. Oct. 22, 1925.*

I have great pleasure in sending you 3 copies of the large O.E. Grammar, which will be sent to you tomorrow (Friday). A man who has worked at Comp. Philology much, does not find it difficult to become prepared for the teaching of O.E. and M.E., it is merely a matter of time and experience. I think you will find that the more you work at M.E. (philologically) the more interesting you will find it, because of the diversity of dialects. And it must be some encouragement to you that you have a nice number of students. . . .

*Oxford. Feb. 8, 1928.*

I have just finished a new and revised edition of the M.E. Grammar, and have great pleasure in sending you a copy by bookpost. As you will see I have preserved the original plan of the book. To have overburdened it with a mass of details would only confuse young students and prevent them from 'seeing the wood for the trees'. . . .

Professor Harting wrote in reply:

*Mar. 7, 1928.* I have to thank you for your kindness in sending me a free copy of the Old English Grammar, and the new edition of the Middle English Grammar. In its present form the latter work will be even more useful than before. My students use it regularly: it is the only existing treatment of the difficult subject that is concise and clear enough to be of use to a beginner. Jordan's work of course has excellent qualities of its own, but for beginners it is simply bewildering. Besides: it is unfinished, and will remain so. You have admirably succeeded in setting forth an immense array of facts in a way that will be helpful to a young student, instead of frightening him. . . .

I am sending you by the same post a photograph of the Anglistisch Instituut, showing a corner of the room with your portrait as it hangs on the wall. You see that you survey English studies in the University of Groningen in effigy as well as in the spirit! . . .

In conclusion, I give here some of the tributes to the memory of Joseph Wright, and his work for foreign students and teachers, which came to me in 1930. Professor W. Fischer<sup>1</sup> wrote:

Although I never had the privilege of meeting your husband, I feel like a regular pupil of his—his O.E. Grammar, and the El. M.E. and N.E. Grammars never fail to prove a source of new inspiration and instruction, and I use them almost daily. That fine picture of him, in his Oxford gown, hangs framed on the wall of my Seminar study, and thus I feel doubly as though I were in daily intercourse with him. . . .

From the Seminar of English Philology at the University of Latvia came a resolution drawn up by the President of the Seminar, Dr. Alice Carlson, and signed by twenty-five students:

[*Riga. Apr. 17, 1930.*] We all members of the English Seminar of the University of Latvia are deeply grieved to learn of the sudden death of the esteemed and honoured Professor Joseph Wright.

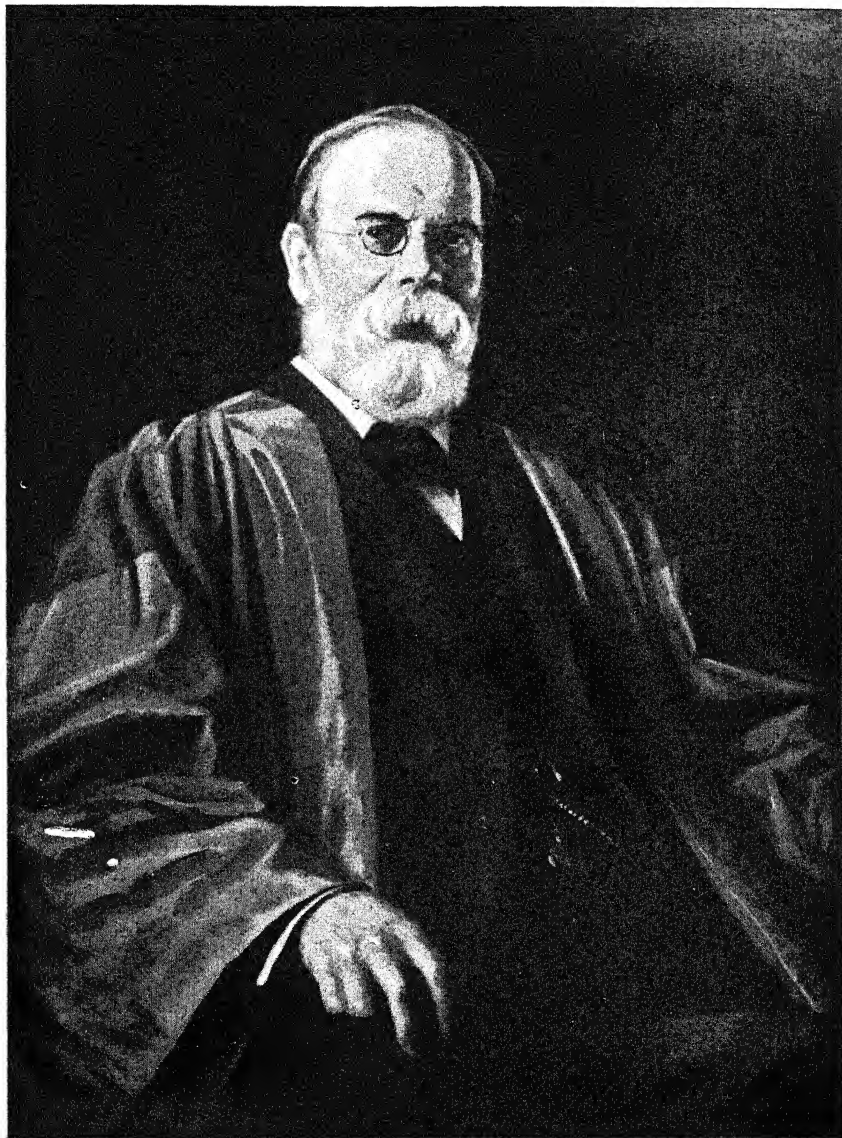
The memory of him as of a great scholar and beloved teacher will always live with us, who are greatly indebted to him for the kind interest which he had even for unknown students of a so far off country.

Professor Brotanek<sup>2</sup> wrote (in German):

We philologists shall sorely miss him who is gone, the successful scholar not less than the warm-hearted encourager and patron of our Seminars. But his life's work will endure, above all that monument of unremitting toil, and of acute observation of linguistic peculiarities: the great Dialect Dictionary.

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English Philology at Giessen.

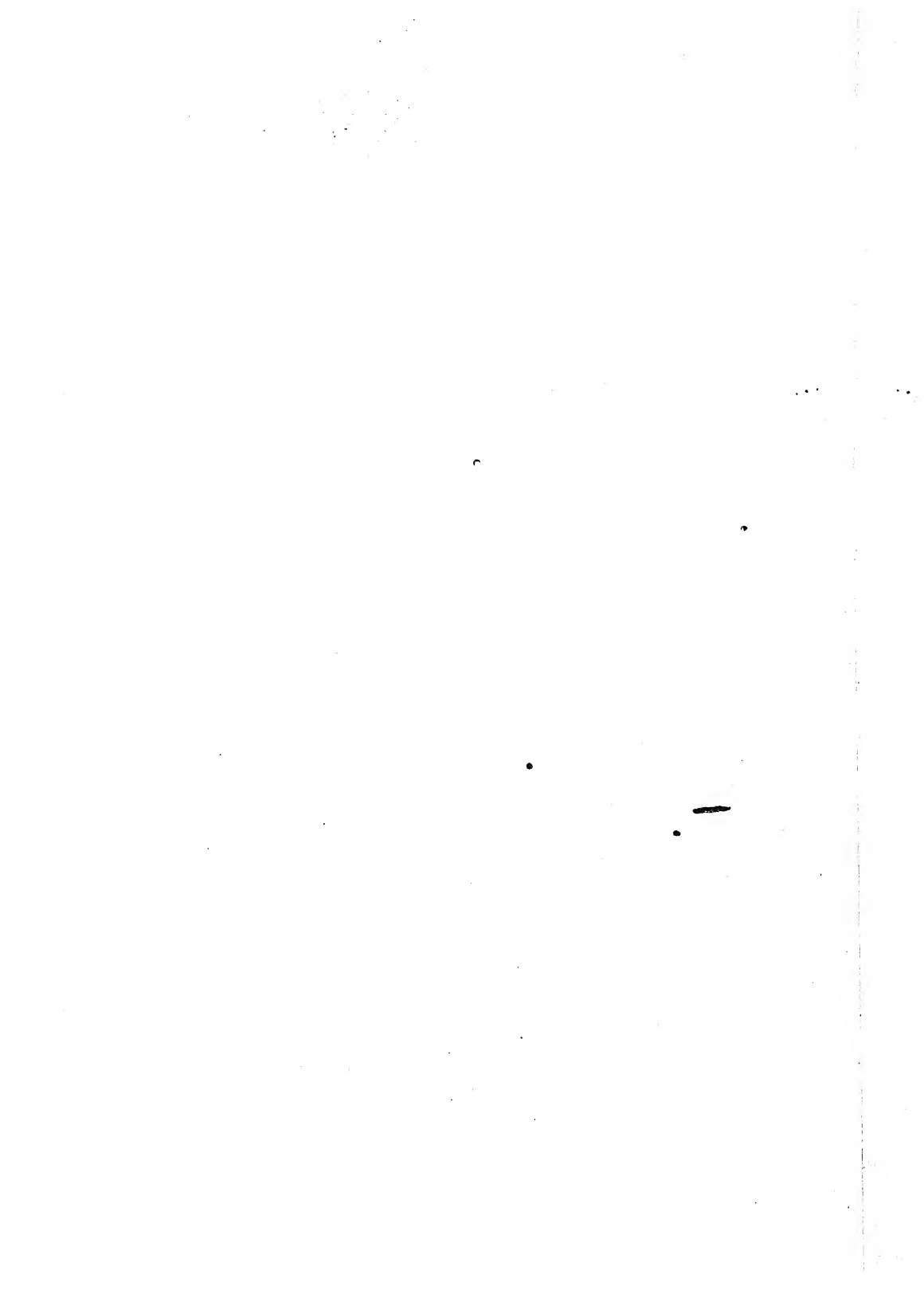
<sup>2</sup> Professor of English Philology at Erlangen.



THE PORTRAIT BY ERNEST MOORE

1926





## CHAPTER SEVEN

### UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS

#### I. THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

FROM the very beginning of his career Joseph Wright's unusual powers of organization were recognized by all who knew him. We have already seen something of his far-sighted capacity for business coupled with scholarship in the production of the *Dialect Dictionary*. The whole bent of his mind was towards progress, and to this end existing material must be systematized, and new machinery shaped to fit future needs. He was essentially an idealist, but at the same time a man of action—if necessary, a strong fighter. He possessed a driving force given to few, which made coping with difficulties a positive pleasure; he had acquired more worldly wisdom than most people because he had had to make his own way in the world unaided, and uncounselled; he had the true Yorkshireman's perspicacity in dealing with his fellow men; a personality which attracted his fellow men; and last but not least, he had a clear-headed facility for dealing with figures and finance, born of his early love for mathematics. All this he was ready and eager to devote to the service of the University when once he had gained a footing in Oxford. The two main directions in which his interests lay were towards the development of the study of English and of Modern Languages; and it is specially in the advancement of the study of Modern Languages that Oxford owes most to the work and influence, and the practical energy, of Joseph Wright.

Coming as he did with no College traditions or associations behind him, his sympathies from the outset were openly on the side of the University as a whole; and for this reason he became at once associated with a group of Oxford men who styled themselves 'The Club': an influential Club which was formed in

1889 at a meeting in Exeter College. Dr. L. R. Farnell<sup>1</sup> wrote for me the following notes referring to this period:

'When Joseph Wright began his career in Oxford in 1888, his Academic experience was limited to that of a German University, and he was a stranger to the Collegiate System of our two older Universities, which is unique among the academies of Europe and America. But he arrived at a time when a movement which had begun in the 'sixties was now at full tide for harmonising the Tutoriate and the Professoriate, and for thus uniting and developing the Colleges into a University organisation, while preserving what was of special value in the older discipline of separate College teaching. Those who were leading this movement had formed an influential Academic club, of which some account is given in the biographical memoir on Sidney Ball, published in 1923 (pp. 189-202); and shortly after Wright had settled among us, he was elected a member, having been speedily brought into touch with us by his friend Professor Napier, one of our most ardent champions of research, and University reform. Wright . . . worked with him enthusiastically and effectively in the development of the English School and English studies.' (I give here some extracts from the book<sup>2</sup> to which Mr. Farnell refers):

'[The aim of the club] was mainly to maintain and develop the character of the University as a home of learning and science, and for this purpose to place the interests of the University as a whole above those of the separate College; to strengthen the influence of the Professoriate; and to diffuse the ideal of research throughout the College teaching staffs; to encourage new subjects of study but to keep the examination system within bounds, and to exorcise the examination spirit; to act on Academical, not on political grounds in elections to Council and other University bodies; finally to safeguard the Bodleian Library as a centre of mature study. . . . The first

<sup>1</sup> Sometime Rector of Exeter College.

<sup>2</sup> *Sidney Ball. Memories and Impressions of 'An ideal Don'*, arranged by Oona Howard Ball, 1923. Vide *Academic Politics*, by Dr. L. R. Farnell, pp. 189 ff.

important measure that emanated from the Club, and was strongly supported by it in all its stages, was the scheme for the establishment of a School of English Language and Literature.'

A proposal for a new Honour School which combined English Literature and five Modern Languages had failed in 1887. When the movement started again its advocates had wisely decided to separate English altogether from other languages. Sir Charles Firth<sup>1</sup> has written the history of the whole movement from its very first stirrings in Oxford—I quote from his tract: 'In June 1891, a memorial was drawn up and presented to the Hebdomadal Council, asking for the establishment of a Final Honour School of English Language and Literature.' Council, however, did not agree to the proposal, and it was not till three years later that the necessary Statute was drawn up by Council, and passed by Congregation and Convocation, and the English Honour School came into being. In November 1894 a Board of Studies was constituted, which 'set to work to devise regulations for the examination'.<sup>2</sup> For some years the development of the School was beset with difficulties. English was a new study—come, like a poor relation from the country, to settle down beside the 'old and well-established studies'—with few teachers and small resources, and it became obvious that more organization was required. The English Board 'appointed on March 6, 1907, a Committee to organize to the best of its ability the teaching and lecturing given for the School. The Committee began by issuing a circular to the various colleges, in which they offered to guarantee adequate teaching and supervision to all candidates taking the School upon payment of a fixed terminal fee for each candidate. The fee asked was £5 per term for each student.'<sup>3</sup> The scheme came into force in January 1908, and was known as the English Fund. As a result of its establishment 'the number of lectures given for the School was greatly

<sup>1</sup> *The School of English Language and Literature*, by C. H. Firth, M.A., Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford, 1909, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

increased, courses were given on subjects never previously lectured upon, and old subjects were treated from new points of view. The field to be covered was more adequately covered, and the variety of lectures and methods of treatment stimulated the interest of the students. The power of supplementing the few regular lecturers for the School by obtaining the assistance of persons not habitually engaged in its teaching, is one of the chief advantages of the present system.<sup>1</sup>

The institution of this Fund was largely the work of Joseph Wright. It proved a great success, and there are some who still think—as did the chief founder of it—that it was a great mistake to abandon it. For the student it meant financially merely a difference in the distribution of the ordinary fees paid per term, and he—or she—reaped the benefit of the extra money available for supplying additional teaching. Professor Nichol Smith,<sup>2</sup> to whom I appealed for help when writing this chapter, wrote for me the following notes:

‘I remember hearing from Professor Wright that the decision to form the Fund was made in the verandah outside your dining-room, and that the others present were Professor Firth and Professor Raleigh. . . . The scheme was a bold one—Professor Raleigh used to describe it as piratical. Four men—J. W., C. H. F., W. A. R., and A. S. N[apier]—constituted themselves a Committee of English Studies, and were able to secure a majority of votes at the Board. They received fees from students, or rather colleges, or societies, and with the money thus received paid tutors and lecturers. There was considerable opposition, but several colleges found it to their interest to fall in with the scheme, and a beginning was made. . . . In November 1909 a Statute putting the scheme on a permanent basis was brought before Congregation, and was carried in a crowded house by a decisive majority, largely because of Raleigh’s admirable speech. . . . The Statute became law in 1910. The financial details of the scheme were Professor

<sup>1</sup> *The School of English Language and Literature*, C. H. Firth, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford.

Wright's, and his was the main active power behind its launching. He showed Professor Raleigh what was possible. But I doubt if the University would have accepted it without Raleigh's advocacy. And no one was more convinced of the need of such a scheme than Professor Firth. Without his collaboration I doubt if the others would have moved. . . . Together they were a remarkable team, each supplementing the other. The English Fund Statute was in force till about 1925, when the new legislation due to the last Commission made it desirable that the English School should fall into line with the other and older Schools. It had grown to such dimensions that special treatment was thought to be no longer necessary for it. But it could not have grown as it did without the Fund. The point on which the three creators of the Fund all insisted was that centralised control is necessary in the building up of a new school, and it was (I think) Professor Wright who devised the financial arrangements on which this centralised control mainly depended. . . .

'Whatever may be thought of its abandonment (and opinions differ), there can be no doubt of what it had achieved. The growth of the English School is one of the great facts in the history of the University in our time.'

I found a reminiscence of the early difficulties in the path of the English School conveyed in a letter to Joseph Wright written by Sir Walter Raleigh, where he puts his grievance into verse (Oct. 13, 1910):

. . . Crofts wants to print some samples, (not in Sweet,) for his class. I hope we can do this for him. . . . How tremendously the Colleges have collared the financial situation! They don't need special authorisation for  $2\frac{1}{2}d$ .

There were Twenty College Bursars,  
And they did think it best  
To garotte the University  
And sit upon its chest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The Chest' at Oxford and Cambridge signifies the funds of the University, or the office which receives or administers these.

## UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS

The Secretary to the chest  
His life was full of care,  
When he heard their quiet whisperings  
And saw them sitting there.

'Here be twenty learned warriors,  
And I', says he, 'am one;  
I dare not pay a penny  
For anything that 's done.

'Be it known to you, O people  
Who desire to write and read,  
I will not pay a penny  
For anything you need!

'Betake you to the Bursars  
And crook the humble knee,  
For they are rich and mighty,  
And they are bold and free.

'The bed-rid University  
Can never grant you grace,  
For the Twenty College Bursars  
Are the Masters of this place.'

A further gain derived by the English School from this Fund was the foundation of a special Library of its own in July 1914. To quote again from Professor Nichol Smith's notes: 'To the Fund we also owe the existence of the English School Library, and the endowment which ensures that it will be maintained.' Mr. Percy Simpson, the Librarian, tells me in a letter:

*Oct. 19, 1931.* The original idea of an English Library came from Sir Walter Raleigh. At Liverpool he had rooms which he could use for classes and which served as a centre for the business activities of the School. So the idea sprang from him to get a set of rooms and place a Library in them. The first books were placed on the shelves in July 1914, and Mr. Brett-Smith and I were put in charge of them. I remember vividly the keen interest which Professor Wright took in the movement and the very practical help he gave us. The first books placed on the

shelves were 213 volumes of their own publications presented by the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, and 129 volumes, the gift of Professor Wright: these last included sets of the Percy and the Spenser Societies, publications—both out of print, and very valuable—and Arber's 'Garner', and the Professor's own Dialect Dictionary. In those hard times of the War we had only slender grants of £20 or £25 to buy new books; and from time to time Professor Wright would hand over to me some book he had just acquired, such as Cooper's 'Thesaurus', 1578; and he also gave 24 volumes of the Scottish Text Society's publications. . . .

After the death of Professor Napier in May 1916, Joseph Wright set to work to find means to purchase his valuable philological library for the use of the English School. To this end he drew up a circular asking for subscriptions to cover the whole cost of the books as they stood. He constituted himself Secretary and Treasurer to a Committee of sleeping partners; the appeal was issued on June 20; within a fortnight he had succeeded in raising the required sum; and the 'Napier Memorial Library' was added to the possessions of the English School.

He acted as one of the examiners for the School eleven times, between 1899 and 1919, and on these occasions he gave all his weight to increasing the standard of knowledge and accuracy on the Language side; and to seeing that good philological work in the examination should have its full value in the award of Classes. I remember he often referred to a time when an examiners' meeting in his own study lasted till 2 a.m. because he was 'fighting for a candidate whom Sir Walter Raleigh said was "a slogger"'. The girl was given her First the next day, for after her viva Sir Walter Raleigh was convinced that she possessed brains and sound knowledge. The danger of the Literature side was that some candidates with a gift for fine writing could mislead examiners into thinking there was matter behind it. An American pupil of mine once said to me of his friend—just before they were both taking the examination—



'The worst of E. is that he cannot write on a subject unless he knows something about it.' I regret to say that the speaker came out with a Second Class, whilst poor E. was ploughed! On one occasion when Joseph Wright went to London for the day, he came back pleased with having seen over a shop door: 'When advertising—use Gas.' He thought it an apt phrase to remember in connexion with the duties of an examiner. He was invariably kind and genial at a viva, and even the most nervous candidates never came away wounded and crushed, feeling that they had been unable to do their best because of the examiner's ill-timed ridicule or rebuke. He would set a frightened girl to translate from a book, and recover her equilibrium by concentrating her mind on the printed page. So benevolent was he even in the position of presiding invigilator that once a candidate came and asked him, 'Please, Sir, may I suck my pipe', knowing his request would not meet with refusal. Perhaps the examiner was regretfully conscious of the pipe in his own pocket.

On March 14, 1930, the Board of the Faculty of English passed the following motion:

'That the Board of this Faculty record its sense of the loss which the University has sustained in the death of Professor Joseph Wright who by his teaching, his writings, and his gifts for organisation exerted for many years so powerful an influence in the promotion of linguistic studies. The Board remembers with special gratitude the part which he played in the creation of the English Fund and the consequent development of teaching in the English School, and in the formation of the English Library.'

Professor Nichol Smith in a covering letter wrote:

I regard it as one of the great privileges of my life to have been associated with Joseph Wright so long and so intimately. He was one of the most powerful personalities that I can ever hope to meet, and his power was always exerted with perfect disinterestedness, in the promotion of the studies which he had so much at heart. Much as we all admired his gifts for

organisation, his way of getting things done, his extraordinary faculty of making a success of everything he took in hand, the longer we knew him the more we were impressed with the complete absence of any thought for himself—he was always thinking for others, and for the interests which they represented. He alone would have been sufficient in himself to teach me that no really big man ever thinks much about himself. His big way of looking at things, his bigness of mind and of heart will always be uppermost in my recollection of him.

## II. ENGLISH COURSE FOR FOREIGNERS

Joseph Wright's zeal for the development of the study of English, and his active interest in young students, led him to evolve and set in motion in 1913 a 'Course of English Studies for Foreigners at the University of Oxford'. The 'Committee of Management' numbered ten, consisting 'partly of Curators of the Taylor Institution where all the University lectures and classes in Modern Languages are held, and partly of *ex officio* Members of the Board of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages'. Such was the description of the 'Committee' on paper, but the 'Management' was practically all done by Joseph Wright. He often referred in later arm-chair days to the success of schemes he had carried through on the principle of a 'one man Committee'. He sent out the programme of the Course to the Professor of English at every German University, and also to Professors in Holland, Sweden, France, and Austria. It was there stated that he would be ready 'to meet students and to advise them about their work' at the Taylor Institution, or 'to confer with them at his private residence'. He provided himself with a list of addresses to enable him, if need be, to advise them where to find board and residence coupled with opportunity for English conversation. A special paragraph in the programme on 'Social Intercourse' held out the prospect of 'becoming acquainted with English society and family life during their stay in Oxford', and I know he himself did everything he could to help them by showing them hospitality in his own house and

by introducing them to his friends. The preliminary correspondence with intending students was heavy, judging from the pile of letters still extant. They were 'expected to possess such a working knowledge of written and spoken English as will enable them to derive the full educational benefit from attendance at the Course, which does not make any provision for teaching the elementary stages of the language to mere beginners'. Some of their elaborate 'written English' caused their wants to sound rather big and comprehensive: 'As I can only stay in Oxford for some months, I mean that the course for the Foreigners must be the best for me.' 'I am not a philological student but a man who intends to increase the understanding of English authors.'

The full Course comprised about seventeen lectures and classes a week, and the prospectus gave a list of fourteen Professors, Readers, and Lecturers who had promised to take part in it.

The Vice-Chancellor's<sup>1</sup> reception of the idea had not been very encouraging. He wrote:

21 *July*, 1913.

MY DEAR WRIGHT,

Many thanks to you for sending me the scheme for a course of English studies, in which I am much interested.

You must I think expect some criticism on starting a Scheme which is at least similar to that which was rejected by Congregation last term. . . .

The scheme was, however, successfully launched, and only came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of the War.

In a letter to Professor Curtis (July 12, 1913) Joseph Wright said:

. . . Some of us here have long been desirous to institute a Course of Anglistic Studies for foreign students who come to England for a limited time to improve their knowledge of the spoken and written language, and at the same time to pursue

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Heberden, Principal of Brasenose College.

their other Anglistic studies. I am sending you by this post some copies of the proposed Course—pretty thorough and comprehensive. Although we shall not decline to admit students of other nationalities, the Course has been specially instituted for the help of German Students. . . .

It is clear from the replies from other Professors abroad, that he sent a personal letter in each case with the printed programme. One and all welcomed the plan with great enthusiasm, expressing in glowing terms their gratitude for this fresh proof of Joseph Wright's practical devotion to scholarship, and of his intimate knowledge of the requirements of foreign students. A Leiden Professor wrote saying that the Course 'supplies a need which has been felt by every serious Dutch student of English language and literature'. A letter in a minute and shaky handwriting from Johann Storm<sup>1</sup> reads like a patriarchal blessing:

*Christiania. 20 July 1913.*

DEAR PROFESSOR, I think very highly of your Committee and Course but I can scarcely write. I have resigned my professorship. I am close upon 77 years. I leave the rest to my successors.

Wishing you every success,

. Yours sincerely, JOH. STORM.

Professor Schick<sup>2</sup> wrote (in German):

*Dec. 29, 1913.* . . . Your whole scheme I find admirably planned out, and we German teachers of Anglistik, and our students, can only be cordially grateful for the proposed arrangements wherein all their needs have been so carefully taken into account. . . . You have rendered new and great service to my countrymen in the cause of English studies, and to both lands in the promotion of friendly relations. . . .

Professor Logemann<sup>3</sup> said:

*Brussels. July 18, 1913.* . . . The idea in itself is simply

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Romance and English Philology at Christiania.

<sup>2</sup> Professor of English Philology at Munich.

<sup>3</sup> Professor of English Language and Literature at Ghent.

splendid. I wish it had come 25 years before—or was it more?—when I was a student myself. . . .

The human side of the scheme, and the true inwardness of Joseph Wright's share in the organization of it, is best shown by the letters from the foreign students themselves, here in Oxford:

*Oxford. 16th of June 1914.*

DEAR SIR, I have just now received the invitation to the garden party of the German Literary Society. I thank you very much for it! I should be much obliged to you if you could possibly procure me a ticket for the Debating Evening (in the Union Society on Thursday 18th of June) which I am anxious to hear. . . .

(HANS WEBER).

*Oxford. June 22nd, 1914.*

DEAR MR. WRIGHT, I have to thank you again for this new proof of your kindness, the sending of a Commemoration ticket. I am only doubtful whether I shall be up to the part of a 'distinguished stranger'; I never acted it before. But I shall try to do my best.

(G. MICHA).

Most significant of all is the following;

*Oxford. June 20th, 1914.*

DEAR MR. WRIGHT,

At the end of the Summer Term 1914, the Members of the Course for Foreigners ask you kindly to accept these few flowers as a token of their deepest and sincerest gratitude. We have to thank you for having arranged these Courses, the first of their kind in England, which, we hope, will prosper and do much good to many others as they have done to us; we thank you also for the personal interest you have taken in each one of us and for the advice with which you have assisted us during the whole time of our stay and of our studies; and we thank you especially, yourself and Mrs. Wright, for the kind hospitality which you have shown us in your own house. Believe us to be fully aware that, if we have felt at ease and even happy during

these months, it is to a great extent due to your kindness; and be convinced that whenever we shall think of this splendid old town of Oxford, 'Thackley' will never be forgotten.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COURSE FOR FOREIGNERS,

*Summer Term, 1914.*

### III. MODERN LANGUAGES

After the scheme of 1887 combining English and Modern Languages had fallen through, whilst the advocates of English succeeded in forming an independent School in 1894, Modern Languages continued to be unrepresented among the Honour Schools. In a letter to Professor Holthausen (June 21, 1888) Joseph Wright mentioned that a scheme for establishing a School for Modern Languages 'will be brought up again next term'; but it was not till 1903 that the goal was reached. The history of the whole movement is given by Sir Charles Firth in his *Modern Languages at Oxford, 1724-1929*. He there records that: 'A statute making an examination in Modern Languages one of the Honour Schools in the Second Public Examination was brought forward in 1903. It was introduced in Congregation by the President of Magdalen on 12 May, and the preamble was carried by 93 to 51 votes. The opposition to the measure was very half-hearted. . . . On November 17 the statute was approved by Congregation without a division. In the summer of 1905 the first examination took place, and a new era in the study of Modern Languages at Oxford began.'<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Wright—as we have seen—took an important share in the organization and development of the English School, but the part he played in advancing the School of Modern Languages was still greater, and more important in its results. The centre of the study of Modern Languages in Oxford is the foundation known as the Taylor Institution. Sir Robert Taylor was originally a sculptor, and afterwards an architect of some distinction, who flourished early in the reign of George III, and died in 1788. He bequeathed to Oxford University £65,250 to

<sup>1</sup> *Vide pp. 74, 75.*

found an Institution for the teaching of Modern Languages. The University came into possession of the bequest in 1835, after the death of Sir Robert Taylor's son. The present building was completed in 1847. It provided rooms for teaching, and a spacious library, and a limited annual sum from endowment for the payment of teachers. The duties of management and administration were entrusted by the University to a board of Curators. The original staff consisted of a teacher of French, a teacher of German, and a Professor of Modern European Languages in general. The history of the Taylor Institution has been given by Sir Charles Firth,<sup>1</sup> therefore I shall only attempt to give some account of Joseph Wright's connexion with it. I may add that when we discussed together this Biography, he used to say to encourage me in my task: 'For the Taylor part you have Firth's book, so you'll have no trouble about that.'

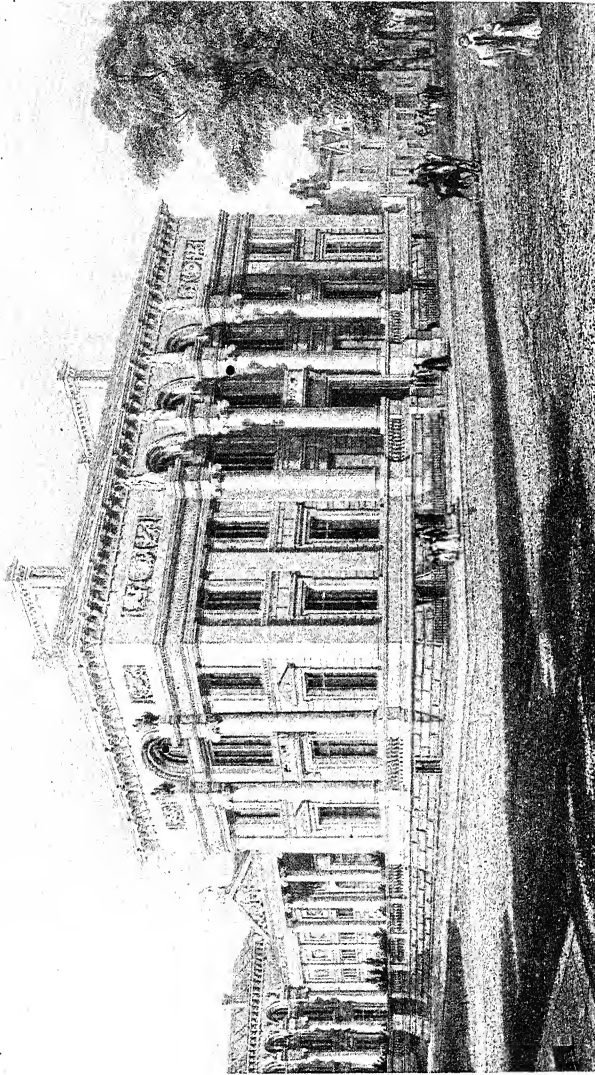
As Professor of Comparative Philology he was one of the Curators of the Institution, and in 1909 he became also Honorary Secretary; a post he held till 1926. It was mainly due to his foresight and financial skill in organizing the teaching, that on the basis provided by the Institution there grew up a prosperous Honour School of Modern Languages. The School made rapid progress between the years 1905 and 1914. The number of students who attended lectures and classes in 1914 was over three times as large as in 1905. And during this period the staff also increased from four Lecturers in 1905 to eleven Lecturers and two Professors in 1914.

The first of these two new Professorships was the Professorship of German. In December 1905 Dr. H. G. Fiedler<sup>2</sup> was invited by the Curators to lecture in Old and Middle High German and the History of the German Language during 1906. They 'wished to convert this Lectureship into a Professorship, and a decree for the purpose was proposed in November 1906, but rejected by Congregation'.<sup>3</sup> A humorous poem in the

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Modern Languages at Oxford, 1724-1929*, Chapter II, 'Sir Robert Taylor's Foundation', and following chapters.

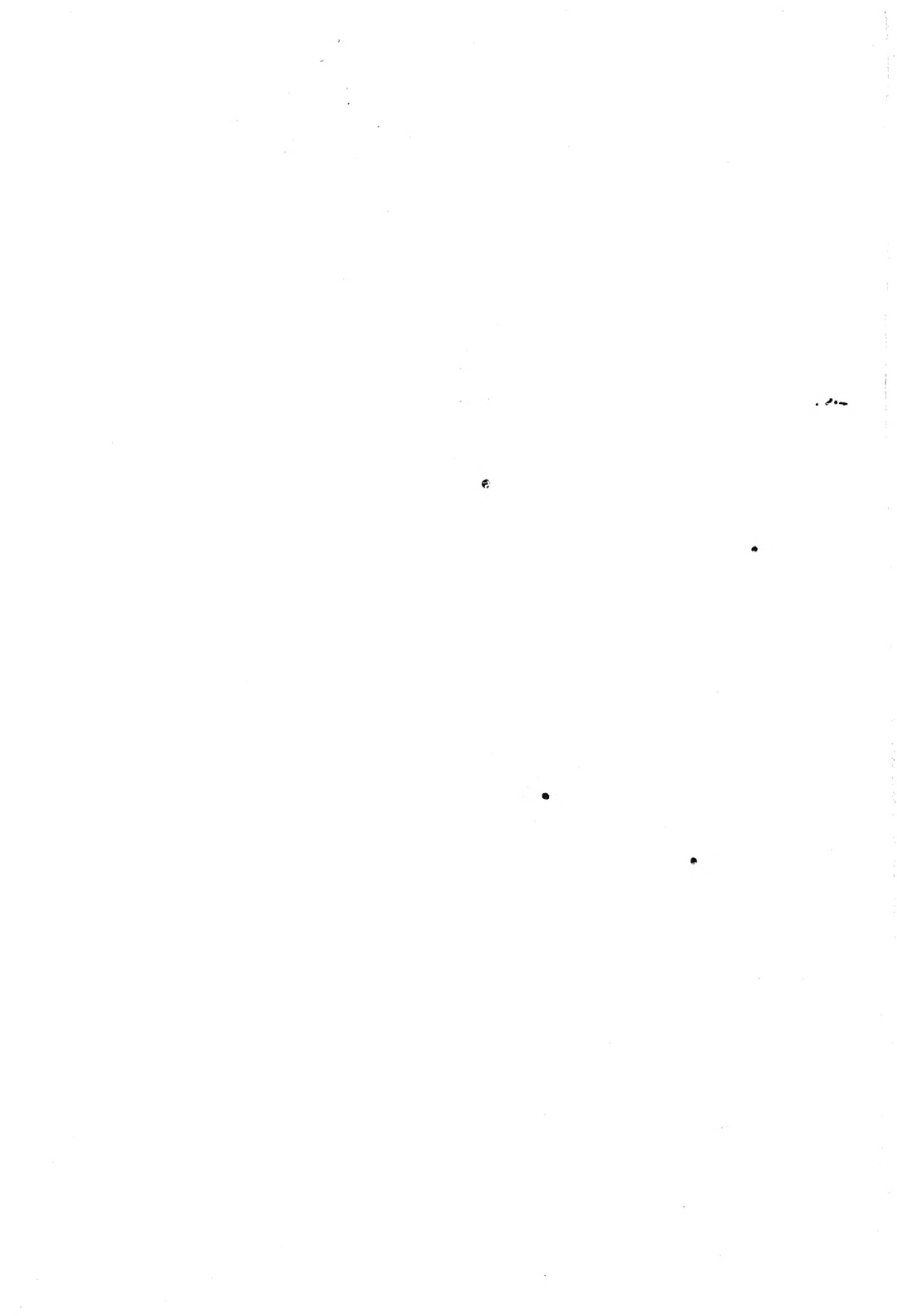
<sup>2</sup> Then Professor of German at Birmingham University.

<sup>3</sup> Vide Firth, *Modern Languages at Oxford*, p. 83.



SOUTH-EAST VIEW OF THE TAYLOR BUILDING AND UNIVERSITY  
GALLERIES, 1847





*Oxford Magazine* (Dec. 5, 1906) refers to Joseph Wright's efforts in the cause which was temporarily lost:

Then at last we found a fighter  
Both temperate and strong:  
But Professor Wr-ght is right  
When he's not Professor Wrong.

- So *minoree partie plarquet*  
(For the Pr-ct-r was sublime).  
And the foes of Old High German  
Must have had a high old time.

Notwithstanding this failure the Curators persisted in their plan, and the Taylorian Professorship of German was created in 1907, and Professor Fiedler<sup>1</sup> was elected to fill it.

The outbreak of the War naturally checked the increase in the numbers studying Modern Languages. Nearly all the male students disappeared. But the School kept alive; the examinations were held, and most of the classes were continued. Joseph Wright did the work of several absent teachers, and he thus saved money for the reorganization of Language studies after the War was over. During the five years of the War only twenty men and fifty-one women took the examination.

Besides making the most of endowments and fees Joseph Wright contributed to the funds of the Institution out of his own savings. In 1908 'Three persons (now known to have been Dr. Wright, Mr. H. T. Gerrans, and Professor Fiedler) offered the Curators £200 a year for the next five years "for the purpose of assisting to provide additional instruction in the German language and literature, and for the development of the German Seminar library"'.<sup>1</sup> When in 1909 lectures on French Literature were needed, and the Curators had not the funds in hand for the purpose, Joseph Wright provided the salary of a Lecturer for the next three years.

In a letter to Professor Curtis (May 1, 1914) he wrote: 'The study of English and Modern Languages continues to make

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

steady progress with us, but we are sorely hampered by not having a Professorship in French Literature.' In 1918 a gift of £25,000 from Sir Basil Zaharoff for the teaching of French enabled the University to establish the Marshal Foch Professorship of French Literature, and Dr. Gustav Rudler was appointed Professor in 1919. In the same year (1918) a gift of £10,000 from Mr. Arthur Serena provided for the creation of a Professorship in Italian. Strengthened by these and other new endowments, the School was reorganized, and between 1919 and 1926 it regained its old prosperity.

On the death of Mr. Gerrans in 1920—a Curator of the Taylor Institution for nearly twenty years—Joseph Wright conceived the idea of perpetuating his memory by raising a sum of money to be called the Gerrans Memorial Fund. He immediately set to work, and finally collected subscriptions amounting to £967. The income arising from this Fund was to be applied—as he stated in the circular: 'to promote the production of research work in any subject connected with Modern Foreign Languages or Literatures: (a) By contributions towards the cost of publishing such work, when it is not likely to be remunerative. (b) By grants of money to enable scholars to visit foreign libraries for the collection of material for publication, which cannot be obtained in this country. (c) By awards for work of value which has already been published.'

It was a fitting memorial to a personal friend, and in its object it also maintains the principle which Joseph Wright so often impressed on students, viz. the duty of producing out of knowledge gained something useful to the world.

With the growth of the School it soon became obvious that the building which had amply sufficed to accommodate a small staff of teachers and a handful of students, would before long be inadequate to meet new demands. Joseph Wright was bent heart and mind on seeing the Taylor Institution take its place as an integral part of Oxford life and influence, and to do this he foresaw that the actual building must be extended, and he determined to acquire money and land for expansion. An

account of 'the great development of Modern Language studies at Oxford' which he drew up in 1920 gives the figures showing the gradual increase in numbers of students, lectures, classes, and teaching staff. 'The number of individual students who attended the lectures and classes in 1900 was not more than about 40 and the fees paid amounted to £77. In the academic year 1919-20, the number of individual students is over 500 and the fees amount to over £2,200. . . . The need of more adequate accommodation for lectures and more space for the regular expansion of the Library had been seriously felt for some years previous to the War, but owing to the increased number of students it is now a perpetual source of practical difficulties, and will remain a constant obstacle to the efficiency of our teaching until the extension of the building can be effected.'

The year 1909 saw the beginning of the campaign for the extension<sup>1</sup> of the Taylor Institution, for which Joseph Wright worked and fought till his life's end. The Curators opened negotiations for the purchase of four shops in St. Giles' which lay next the Institute. Two of them were purchased in 1909, and it was ascertained that the other two could be bought for £10,500. 'That sum was provided by donations of £1,000 from Professor Fiedler, £1,000 from Mr. H. T. Gerrans, and £1,500 from Professor Wright, and by obtaining a loan of £7,000 from the Trustees of the University Endowment Fund.'<sup>2</sup> A site being now secured, the next step was to find money for building on it. The Curators' Report for 1913 said: 'It has been estimated that an enlargement worthy to rank side by side with the present building would cost about £15,000, and that at least another £5,000 would be required to provide for the additional administrative expenses.' Then came the War, which postponed a public appeal for support, and which also raised the cost of building to such an extent that fully £10,000 beyond the original estimate would be required for the proposed extension if and when it could be undertaken. But before the

<sup>1</sup> Vide Firth, *Modern Languages at Oxford*, pp. 124 ff., 'The Extension and its History'.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

War was over, Joseph Wright had started making private appeals to the wealthy. I find replies to such from Walter Morrison:

*Malham Tarn, Settle. Oct. 20, 1917.*

I can understand that the Taylor Institute needs enlarging, but you do not give the name of your Bankers, full name, and *full name* of the Fund.

Yours truly,  
W. MORRISON.

*Oct. 24, 1917.*

I remember the Taylor Institution, and can quite understand that increased study of Languages generally, not only European Languages, needs more accommodation. It will need more endowment, and this should come from suppression of Idle Fellowships. The money spent on that is a gross misuse of it; the Pious Founders founded colleges to promote learning and not to provide recruits for the greatly overcrowded ranks of the English Bar.

I was once a student of a foreign language at the Taylor Institution for one hour, at 17 years of age. I came up to Oxford in 1854. Finding myself, for a short time, industrious and diligent as a student, I put down my name and paid the fee, for the French Professor, (or Reader), at the Taylor Institution. Being modest as regards my own attainments I entered my name for the junior or elementary class, and attended the first lecture. The poor man spent the hour in teaching us how to pronounce *Qu'est que c'est*. As I was taught French in the schoolroom before I went to school at 8 years of age, and could pronounce *Qu'est que c'est* then, and had since been in France, I did not attend another lecture; it was very improbable that the poor man had any brains.

I enclose a cheque for £1000. I make it payable to the Bankers, because so many letters are stolen and opened on the chance of finding a note or cheque therein. . . .

Amongst other letters of almost the same date I find one

from Lord Curzon, and one from Lord Bryce, both saying that an appeal of this sort was worthy, but unseasonable. A year later Sir Basil Zaharoff refers to Joseph Wright's letter as 'your very ardent prayer about the Taylorian Extension Fund', to which, he says, 'I really hate to say "no"'. It was probably at about this time that Joseph Wright was doing his best to persuade his friend and fellow Yorkshireman Sir James Roberts to come forward and provide for the new building with one munificent gift. He kept up the plea for years, and so sanguine was he of ultimate success that he had plans made by an architect<sup>1</sup> for a noble structure to be called the Roberts Building. The plans were submitted<sup>2</sup> to Sir James Roberts, and retained by him, but in the end nothing happened, and Joseph Wright was forced to be content with seeking for minor patrons.

In May 1920 the Curators authorized the issue of a printed appeal for subscriptions. It was drawn up by Joseph Wright as Secretary, and in it he gave—as is there stated—'a fairly comprehensive account of the Taylor Institution and of its activities in the furthering of the study of Modern Languages at the University'.

The period immediately following the War was not propitious for acquiring money on a large scale for educational purposes, and when the appeal was started Joseph Wright was only just recovering from a severe illness, and was, moreover, waiting till he had gathered up sufficient strength to undergo a dangerous operation. Nevertheless, he worked for hours a day, collecting suitable addresses, and dispatching the appeal by post. A goodly amount of subscriptions came in, and he was also encouraged by appreciative letters from friends. The Provost of Oriel wrote (May 30, 1920): 'Many thanks for the proof of your plucky appeal for the Taylor. . . I hope you are keeping well. You were never more valuable!' The Vice-Chancellor<sup>2</sup> wrote (June 1, 1920): ' . . . Everyone who knows anything about it recognizes the services which you have

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Edward B. Nevinson.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Blakiston, President of Trinity College.

rendered to the University, both pecuniarily and (I am afraid) at the cost of your health.' Sir Basil Zaharoff wrote (June 5, 1920): '... I have no doubt that, with your push and energy, you will succeed in finding the funds necessary for your praiseworthy object. . . . I *do* hope your health will quickly be restored. You are too valuable to be an invalid.'

He continued the work of distributing the appeal up to the day he was removed to a Nursing Home, and four days after the operation he had resumed his keen interest in it. Across a letter (dated June 14) from somebody who excused himself for not subscribing by saying he did not 'approve of the policy of those in charge of Modern Language study at Oxford', I find a note of mine, evidently inspired by the patient: 'begged him to postpone distributing his "financial help" elsewhere till J. W. can write.'

Referring in later years to this effort on behalf of the Taylorian Extension Fund, Joseph Wright told a friend: 'My wife and I worked like niggers sending out thousands of circulars appealing for subscriptions.' He compiled a letter to be sent out with the printed appeal, and he and I wrote large numbers of these ourselves. The one I have before me is dated December 10, 1920:

*Taylor Institution. Oxford.*

DEAR SIR, I am venturing to send you herewith a printed appeal for funds to enable the University to enlarge the Taylor Institution, which has now become quite inadequate for its purpose.

If you will kindly read the appeal, and think over what we have accomplished in the past, what we are doing now, and what we hope to achieve in the future for the promotion of Modern Language Studies at the University, you will then, I think, agree that the object of the appeal is one worthy of generous support.

If you can kindly see your way to render us any financial assistance whatever in this important national work, we shall be very grateful.

Within two years the proceeds of this appeal, added to the funds already in hand, amounted to over £12,000, and the Curators were able to claim £3,000 promised by the Trustees of the University Endowment Fund when this sum should be reached. By 1925 further arrangements with regard to the site had been completed, and the way was clear for building the Extension 'as soon as the rest of the money could be obtained'.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Wright had resigned his Professorship at the end of 1924; and in March 1926 he resigned the Honorary Secretaryship to the Curators of the Taylor Institution, when Professor Fiedler was elected Secretary in his stead. The Vice-Chancellor<sup>2</sup> wrote:

*Feb. 27, 1926.* Many thanks for your letter of yesterday. I am very sorry indeed that you have to give up the Secretaryship of the Taylor, and still more for the cause. I hope that by taking care of yourself, you will soon be about again.

We shall be most sorry to lose you at the Taylor. What you have done for it in the past it is impossible to exaggerate. When you joined it, it was a comparatively small thing, with a fine building and an endowment, but with very little life. You have made it a living force in the life of the University and in the teaching of Modern Languages in England. I hope you will long live to see your work carried on and developed.

Yours very sincerely, J. WELLS.

I will communicate your letter to the Curators at their next meeting.

Professor Fiedler wrote:

*March 6, 1926.* At the meeting of the Curators held this afternoon your resignation as Secretary to the Taylor Institution was accepted with very great regret, and the following resolution was passed:

'The Curators of the Taylor Institution desire to put on record their deep and grateful sense of the great services rendered to the Institution by Professor Joseph Wright during

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Firth, Modern Languages at Oxford*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Joseph Wells, Warden of Wadham College.



the many years he acted as their Secretary. They warmly appreciate the high ability and single-mindedness with which he conducted their affairs, and his untiring efforts to promote the study and teaching of Modern Languages in Oxford. They feel that the great expansion of the School of Modern Languages has been largely due to his devotion and ability as an organizer.'

The Curators have appointed me your successor. . . . I need not say that I shall do my best to carry on the work in your spirit, though I am conscious of the fact that no one can replace you and that I can only hope to follow in your steps if I may rely on your help and advice.

May I add an expression of my own heartfelt gratitude for all you have done for the cause of Modern Languages during your long tenure of office, and assure you that I shall always cherish the recollection of your friendship and never-failing sympathy.

The sum of money available for the new building was steadily increasing by investment of the annual interest, but it was still insufficient, whilst the need for extension became more and more urgent. Then Joseph Wright 'came forward to complete his work. On 18 May 1927, he offered the University the sum of £10,000, free of legacy duty, towards the extension of the Taylorian Institution on the site acquired in 1910. The bequest was subject to the condition that interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum on the said sum should be paid to him during his life, and to his wife, if she should survive him.'<sup>1</sup> He further stipulated that the Extension should be begun within two years of the date on which the University received the money. He told a representative of the press: 'The Taylorian gave me my start in life, and I have never ceased to be indebted to it. Modern Language teaching has grown so much in Oxford that the present building is inadequate, and I want to see a worthy building in my lifetime'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vide Firth, *Modern Languages at Oxford*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *Oxford Chronicle*, June 9, 1928.

The announcement of this gift was received with acclamation in Yorkshire:

... Bradford has produced many men who by the force of their own resolute character have defied circumstance, and carved out a way to fame and fortune. Generally, however, as is very natural in a great industrial centre, such men have found a congenial sphere for their energy and ability in business. Dr. Wright stands by himself in his unfaltering devotion to scholarship. . . . He has devoted a lifetime of arduous toil to the study of language, and he now makes that study more easily accessible to others by a gift which would appear generous even in a man of considerable wealth, and which in a scholar of his record is munificence. Bradford, and particularly that part of it which is most closely associated with Dr. Wright, was proud of him before. He now gives us further cause for pride.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Wright responded to this tribute in a personal letter to his friend the Editor:

*June 24, 1928.*

Many thanks for kindly sending me a copy of your long and most interesting article, which I greatly appreciate. . . . People here are wondering how I have managed to save so much money. I tell them that I learnt how to save or earn money, but that I have always been too busy to learn how to spend it. . . . I don't know whether I ever sent you the picture postcard of my house which I built 24 years ago *without* a builder. Notice the roof which I brought from Yorkshire. There are no roofs like it in this part of the country. . . .

The reasons why the University did not at once accept this offer, are indeed, as Sir Charles Firth writes, 'difficult to understand'. The Hebdomadal Council 'appointed a Committee to consider Dr. Wright's offer, which reported in favour of its acceptance on 28 October 1927'.<sup>2</sup> But months dragged on, and

<sup>1</sup> *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, June 23, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Firth, Modern Languages at Oxford*, p. 136.

no definite answer was given. The Vice-Chancellor<sup>1</sup> wrote several letters regretting the delay. I quote the following one, because a rough draft of Joseph Wright's reply has been preserved with it, containing one or two phrases very characteristic of the writer:

*All Souls College. June 12, 1928.*

. . . I am very sorry that there has been so much delay over this whole matter; but for a long time, as you will have gathered, Council and the Chest were in opposition.

The Chest have, I understand, found the preparation of the necessary Decree difficult, owing to the necessity for framing provisions for the meeting of the heavy annual charge which will fall on the University, by reason of the Extension, and I am sorry to say that the final decision of Congregation cannot be reached this term. . . .

I can entirely understand and sympathize with your natural anxiety to get the whole thing settled and out of the way. But the matter has been very complicated, and the finance of it has been very difficult.

To this Joseph Wright replied:

*June 14, 1928.*

I am much obliged for your kind letter. I cannot but think that the officials who had to draw up the Decree were most inefficient persons in business transactions—hence the delay. If I had the power, I would apply Lord Fisher's dictum to all of them. My offer is to give £10,000 to the University for the Extension of the Taylor Institution on the understanding that the Extension shall begin within two years from the time when the University receives the £10,000 from me. The question of death duties, succession duties, etc. don't concern the University. Those are questions which only concern my estate, and have nothing whatever to do with the University. The University was to receive £10,000 net without any liability, or having to pay anything out of that sum at some future date,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. F. W. Pember, Warden of All Souls College.

otherwise I could not be said to have given the University £10,000 *net*. The least the officials could have done if they had any doubts in their poor weak minds was to consult me and have their doubts removed.

Please don't think I am angry: it's only a *real* Yorkshireman's way of looking at things.

At the time when the University was contemplating the building of the Taylor Institution out of Sir Robert Taylor's bequest it had in hand another Trust Fund,<sup>1</sup> which was to be used to erect a building to hold works of art. The University decided to put the new Galleries and the Taylor Institution side by side on one piece of land, combined in one building, forming two parts of one architectural design. In 1894 part of the site used for the Galleries for Fine Arts being still vacant, a museum of antiquities was added, and about fourteen years later these two institutions were amalgamated under the name of the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. As time went on, the Ashmolean, like the Taylorian, felt the need of room to expand, and coveted for this purpose its neighbour's house. In 1919, when the scheme for the extension of the Taylor Institution was making definite progress, the Keeper of the Ashmolean made an attempt to get the University Commission to support an opposition scheme. In a statement submitted to the Commission he said:

'It has long been my opinion that the Antiquarium's needs for some generations to come would be best met, if the Taylor Institution building, set free by the provision of a new Modern Language Institute on some other site, were to be appropriated to the Ashmolean. . . .'<sup>2</sup>

His plan was that the Taylorian Curators should remove their Library, staff, and students elsewhere, and give up the vacated building, and the newly acquired site of the four adjacent shops, to accommodate the Ashmolean antiquities,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Firth, *Modern Languages at Oxford*, p. 24, and pp. 124 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131 ff.

present and future. In February 1928, when Joseph Wright's offer of £10,000 had made it possible that the new Taylorian Extension might actually be begun within a short time, the advocates of the Ashmolean set themselves in array and 'would not hear of the extension on any terms'.<sup>1</sup> The plan for the eviction of the Taylor was formulated in a definite alternative scheme, and submitted to the Curators. These latter, of course, unanimously rejected it, and continued their own preparations for enlargement on the site they had bought for the purpose. This state of hostility on one side, and preparation on the other, continued till matters were brought to a head when it was known that a Decree for accepting Joseph Wright's £10,000 for the Taylor Extension was to come before Congregation on October 23, 1928. There was a good deal of anxious canvassing of voters, and postmen and messengers were kept busy distributing the pamphlets issued by the supporters on either side, voicing their arguments and mutual antagonism. When the day came: 'The decree, to accept the £10,000 offered by Professor Wright for the extension of the Taylorian was rejected by 121 votes to 92.'<sup>2</sup>

To the outside world the refusal of such a magnificent offer was simply incomprehensible, and many within the academic circle felt that it was—as one of them wrote—'a tremendous mistake for a University to make, due to a complete lack of the sense of proportion'. Dr. Wells in a letter dated Oct. 24 said:

MY DEAR PROFESSOR, I am much distressed by the vote of yesterday. The Visitors of the Ashmolean play the dog in the manger, they do nothing themselves, and they stop other men's good work. This is serious, but even more serious is the discredit they bring on the University. The world will think us (and I fear rightly) fickle, prejudiced, and indifferent to crying needs.

Even those who did their best to wreck your work yesterday, spoke most warmly of it. I am sure that I am expressing a very general feeling when I say that there is a wide and deep

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Firth, Modern Languages at Oxford*, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

sympathy with you for the way in which your work, crowned by a most generous offer, has been treated.

... I believe that many who voted against the Decree did not really grasp the issue at stake. Some thought they were only postponing a difficult question for further deliberation. Others perhaps thought 'culture' demanded a vote in favour of picture-galleries and museums. One lady M.A. whom I was sent to canvass, said: 'Of course *my* sympathies are with Art.' It surprised me that her 'sympathies' were not on the side of young women students wanting to learn languages, but as I was not out to preach homilies, I departed, feeling my errand had been a failure, except that I had gathered up a crumb of amusement for home consumption in days of dearth. For my own part, I naturally only viewed the question in the light of the offer of the money and all that it stood for with Joseph Wright. Any one in opposition to him was to me simply the enemy. Had he been able to rise up and fight his own battle, the result might have been different. He had in his time fought so many battles, and come out of them victorious. But now he was held back by age and weakness, and could only abide patiently at home, whilst his friends went out to fight for him. When they returned to announce defeat, he received them with the utmost calm. Then, and in the days following this heavy reverse, he was calmer than any of his friends. He discussed what had happened in a business-like manner, looking at the legal and financial aspects of the case. It was not that he was invulnerable: far from it. Probably few people, even amongst those who came oftenest into contact with him, realized that behind the bulwarks of solid common sense, and the inner fortifications built up by faith and philosophy, lay a highly sensitive nature, a refinement of feeling none the less susceptible because it showed no hurt, and would remain in essence unimpaired.

The tragedy was not without its funny side. Various unknown persons wrote making suggestions as to how the money refused by the University of Oxford might yet be suitably

spent. A shopkeeper heavily in debt said it would be just the thing to enable him to clear up everything and start a new business in Australia; a maiden lady thought it would be a nice help to her 'to keep her little home together'; another—more importunate—asked for £250 within the next three days, but could (presumably) wait a while for the rest; a lady writer promised in return for this opportune sum to share all the future profits of the epoch-making novel she was about to produce.

By rejecting the Decree, Congregation had in reality done nothing more than refuse Joseph Wright's offer of money for the Taylor Extension. The real question at stake was postponed, but not settled. The Hebdomadal Council was left free 'to introduce the decree again after a certain lapse of time, and to appeal to a better informed and more representative body of voters. . . . The majority and its leaders regarded the issue as settled. They sanguinely believed that their vote would ensure them possession first of the site of the four shops and afterwards of the Taylorian building. If they could prevent the Taylorian from building they thought they could coerce it into removing to a site found somewhere, and compensate it with money found somehow. Their misfortune was that they had no site and no money.'<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Wright's own view of the position of affairs was stated by him in an 'Open Letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University on the Taylorian Extension Scheme', which ran as follows:

DEAR MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR,

I am more sorry than words can express that my offer of £10,000 for the Extension of the Taylor Institution was rejected by Congregation on Tuesday, October 23. I now feel strongly that the many years I have devoted to the promotion of Modern Language Studies at Oxford have been spent in vain. The rejection of the Decree was clearly intended to result in the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Firth, Modern Languages at Oxford*, p. 144.

Taylor Institution being eventually handed over to the Visitors<sup>1</sup> of the Ashmolean. In my opinion this would be the greatest perversion of endowments that has ever occurred in Oxford.

What surprised me most was the light-hearted manner in which it was urged that both the Taylor Institution and the four adjacent shops purchased out of funds specially raised by the Curators for the extension of the Institution should be completely absorbed by the Ashmolean. Morally this scheme is dishonest, financially it would be disastrous to the University.

... The facts are these: to transfer the Taylor Institution to another suitable site would cost the University about £100,000; to build the proposed extension on the site of the four shops would not cost the University a penny beyond the conditions attached to my offer and the mortgage on two of the shops. If my offer had been accepted the Curators would have had in hand the sum of £22,500 for the purpose of the extension, which is enough to erect a good modest building. Where is the £100,000 to come from?

There is another question of great importance to which I must call your attention. Some years ago I sent out an appeal for funds to extend the Taylor Institution on the site of the four shops adjacent to it. I raised from all sources, partly for the purpose of buying the shops, partly for the new building itself, about £15,000, including two thousand guineas which I contributed myself. In the appeal I stated exactly the precise purpose for which the money was wanted. I have always considered myself morally responsible to the donors to the Taylor Extension Fund for seeing that their money was applied to the purpose for which it was given, and since the University by rejecting the Decree renders it impossible to carry out the extension as originally intended, the University will be bound to refund the £15,000 collected.

I remain, dear Mr. Vice-Chancellor,

Yours faithfully, JOSEPH WRIGHT.

119 Banbury Road, Oxford. November 14, 1928.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the Board of Curators, or Directors.



This 'Open Letter' he sent to all the leading newspapers and to a very large number of important people, in Oxford and outside. I have before me letters of thanks from the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Lord Hugh Cecil, the Bishop of Oxford, Sir Michael Sadler, the Secretary to the Rhodes Trust, &c.

Referring to this letter, he wrote to Mr. Wade:

*Nov. 21, 1928.*

Since I addressed the open letter to the Vice-Chancellor there has been a great change of feeling in the University. Few people knew about the large sum of money I had raised for the Extension of the Taylor Institution, and I am now feeling much happier.

In the course of a term or two the Decree will no doubt be brought up again with satisfactory results, but it has been a great blow to me after all the years I have devoted to the promotion of Modern Language Studies at the University. As you may not have seen the letter, I enclose a copy herewith. It will doubtless interest you to have it.

My hand is now tired, so I must stop.

Rather than give up the project on which he had set his heart, he let it be known that his offer should remain open as long as he lived, and he eagerly watched and waited for favourable signs of change in the general attitude of those who had previously stirred up strife. On November 30, 1929, the Taylorian Curators passed the following resolution:

'In view of the facts that the need for extending the Taylor building continues and increases, that more than a year has elapsed since the rejection of the decree for the acceptance of Professor Wright's offer of £10,000 towards the cost of the extension (on October 23rd 1928), that this offer still holds good during his life-time, and that the sum of £10,000 put at the disposal of the University by the Delegates of Local Examinations is available for the purpose of the extension; the

Curators request the Hebdomadal Council to re-introduce the decree in Congregation at an early date.'

In a covering letter Professor Fiedler (the Secretary) wrote:

I enclose a copy of the resolution which was passed unanimously on Saturday and which I have sent to Craig.<sup>1</sup> I saw him this morning and he said he could get it printed and circulated at once so that something might be done at Council on Monday. This time both the Proctors are on our side, last time both were against us.

...

This sounded very hopeful, but nothing happened. Whether the friends of the Ashmolean still deliberately obstructed the realization of the scheme, or whether it was crowded out by other University business, I never knew. I only know that every week to the last Joseph Wright scanned the pages of the *University Gazette*, looking for the notice of the Decree which never came. His one hope for so long had been that he might live to see a new Taylor Building arise to crown his unstinted labours of over forty years in the service of the study of Modern Languages. Providence ordained that it should be left for others to see the fulfilment of this hope. On October 7, 1931, the Vice-Chancellor<sup>2</sup> in his speech on the events of the last academic year is reported to have said: 'He noted that a settlement had also been reached with regard to the difficult question of the future of the Taylor Institution and of the Ashmolean Museum, by which the former would extend over the adjacent property in St. Giles', while for the Ashmolean a development had been planned with a frontage in Beaumont Street and St. John Street.'

But the good news came more than a year and a half too late to gladden the heart of Joseph Wright; and now his £10,000 will one day go to the University of Leeds, to carry on his memory in the county of his birth.

<sup>1</sup> The Registrar of the University.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. F. Homes Dudden, Master of Pembroke College. Quoted from *The Times*, Oct. 8, 1931.

## IV. HEBDOMADAL COUNCIL

In October 1908 Joseph Wright was elected a member of the Hebdomadal Council, which forms the governing body of the University—a Board of Directors, as it were. In the previous year Lord Curzon had succeeded Lord Goschen as Chancellor of the University, and he undertook to improve its organization. Joseph Wright was one of his strongest supporters in his attempted reforms, but he went further than the Chancellor in his desire to develop the central authority of the University as distinguished from the Colleges. He told me: ‘It was a very busy time, because of Lord Curzon’s book.<sup>1</sup> I was on two Committees: the Faculties Committee, and the Pensions Committee.’ He was on the whole relieved when in 1914, at the end of the regulation six years of office, he was not re-elected. Beside the long sittings every Monday afternoon in Term, there were frequent Committee meetings, and papers and reports to be drawn up in preparation for them, taking up time and thought away from the writing of Grammars. He devoted a great deal of energy to the Pensions scheme, collecting and tabulating statistics and general information relating to the methods practised in German Universities. The Vice-Chancellor<sup>2</sup> wrote (Oct. 28, 1914):

*Christ Church, Oxford.* . . . I am so very sorry you are out of Council. You have given us so much help on so many matters. I do not know what will become of the Professorial Pensions business.

When in 1924 a system of pensions was organized for Oxford University, he was often consulted by his contemporaries as to whether or not it was advisable to join the scheme, since this was optional in the case of older Professors, &c. He thought out his own plans, and was given what he wanted. He has frequently said: ‘The University treated me very well in the matter.’

<sup>1</sup> *University Reform*, Clarendon Press, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> The Very Rev. T. B. Strong, Dean of Christ Church, subsequently Bishop of Oxford.

I have before me a copy of a letter—five pages of foolscap—which he wrote to the Vice-Chancellor on December 13, 1914. It reads like a statement issued by a Chancellor of the Exchequer facing his budget in bad times. It begins:

‘As you undoubtedly know, we are all anxious to do what we can to lessen the inevitable deficit of the General University Fund for the calendar year 1915.

... ‘Apart from that portion of the deficit at the end of 1914 which is not in any way due to the War (viz. about £5,500), it has been estimated that there will be an additional deficit of about £5,000 due to the War, but so far as I can see this latter deficit is more than compensated for by the following items. . . .’ This is the preface to suggestions and lists of figures showing how the deficit could be met, and a balanced budget secured. The Vice-Chancellor thanked him for a ‘very important letter’, and said it would be carefully considered by a Committee of Council, but he seemed to question the wisdom of certain of the suggestions made. Whereupon Joseph Wright asked for an interview to explain his figures, which he knew to be sound and worthy of acceptance.

He wrote two long memoranda for the Commission in 1920, one on ‘the Professoriate’, dated January 2, and one on ‘Fees and Dues’, dated January 4, besides a shorter one ‘On the Period of Office of elected Members of Boards of Curators, Delegates, Faculties, Visitors, Permanent Committees, etc. and of the Hebdomadal Council’, dated December 30, 1919. Then, in the middle of January 1920, his increasing ill health culminated in the break-down I have previously recorded, and all his University activities came to an end for a time.

The following are a few extracts from letters written to me in March 1930, by some who had been closely associated with Joseph Wright in his work for Oxford: ‘We were concerned in many things together at various times, and I always found his counsel most helpful. He always made it a pleasure to work with him . . .’ [the Bishop of Oxford]. ‘He was a great figure in the University . . .’ [Dr. Pember]. ‘His influence and the

fruits of his great energy and devoted will-power endure in the University. . . . I know of no-one who worked harder for it, and left a stronger mark on it than he did. . . . Looking back through a long period of memories, I have the strong impression that few of our Professors have given better administrative help to the best causes of our University than Wright, and few have been able to combine so effectively administrative labour with unceasing contribution to their own field of research . . . ' [Dr. Farnell]. 'In Dr. Wright I have lost a friend of more than forty years standing—a man whom I knew and understood better than other people here did because we were brother Yorkshiremen, and our minds worked in the same way. We were associated in many affairs and relied on each other's help, and when we did not agree understood each other. Wright leaves the University the example of a life devoted to learning and teaching, inspired by the most unselfish public spirit, and marked by very many acts of generosity and kindness. Many of these acts are not known to the public here or elsewhere, yet both here and elsewhere there is universal respect for his character, and he will be remembered and honoured . . . ' [Sir Charles Firth]. And from those more directly connected with Modern Languages and the Taylor Institution: 'Your loss is in the fullest sense of the word *our* loss. When I think of all the services rendered by your husband to our cause, of his unfailing kindness, of his generous friendship, of the welcome he has extended to me personally, I cannot adequately put into words my feelings. Professor Wright has been for years and years the very soul of our School. We liked to regard him as our leader; we trusted his advice as well as we appreciated his devotion. As long as one of us survives, his memory will be cherished and remain to us an inspiration . . . ' [Prof. Rudler<sup>1</sup>]. 'Sa perte est une perte pour nous tous, elle laisse un vide profond dans notre groupe universitaire dont il était l'âme vivante à l'heure où nous sommes venus à Oxford . . . ' [Mme Rudler]. 'He was always so kind to me right from the time I

<sup>1</sup> Professor of French Literature.

started to work for the Taylor Institution up to his resignation as Secretary. It was a real pleasure to do the work under his enthusiastic guidance . . . ' [Mr. Diddams<sup>1</sup>]. 'This morning I would not begin my class without telling the students that had it not been for his energy and enthusiasm there would be no School of Modern Languages, and no Taylor Institution, as we know it, at Oxford . . . ' [Prof. Foligno<sup>2</sup>].

A few additional honours were bestowed on Joseph Wright in his later years, commemorating his services as a scholar, and as a member of Oxford University. I give the list of them here by way of epilogue to this chapter.

On June 18, 1919, he was elected Foreign Honorary Member of the Royal Flemish Academy. In November 1925 he was awarded the first biennial British Academy Prize. This was wholly unexpected, and caused him profound gratification. Sir Israel Gollancz, the Secretary, wrote:

*Nov. 26, 1925.* I have the great pleasure to inform you that at yesterday's Meeting of the Council of the Academy, the Earl of Balfour, President, in the Chair, it was unanimously resolved to award to you the first biennial 'British Academy Prize for English Studies', in recognition of your eminent services to English Philology, notably by your English Dialect Dictionary and Grammar, and your more recent contributions to English learning. . . . In making this first award to one whose achievements are so high, the Council feel that they are setting a great mark of distinction on the Prize, which will make it a coveted honour for those to whom it may hereafter be awarded. . . .

On June 1, 1926, he was made a Member of the Provinciaal Utrechtsch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen. On June 15 of that year, Oxford gave him the Degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*. The Public Orator, in presenting him for the Degree, spoke of his thirty-four years' tenure of the Professorship of Philology and of his *magnum opus*, the

<sup>1</sup> Clerk to the Curators.

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Italian Studies.

English Dialect Dictionary. ' . . . He expressed his admiration for the many and great qualities which had enabled one, *qui septuennis asinos agebat*, to attain to so eminent and honourable a position in the University.'<sup>1</sup> Professor Allen Mawer,<sup>2</sup> in a letter of congratulation (July 18, 1926), said: 'I am so very glad that Oxford has in this way recognized all that you have done for English studies. In the work that I am chiefly engaged on nowadays one blesses the author of the Dialect Dictionary every hour of the day.'

In December 1926 he was elected an Honorary Member of the Modern Language Association of America; and lastly, in April 1928 he was elected a Member of the Royal Society of Letters of Lund.

Joseph Wright had always followed the career of the British Academy with great interest; and he now also wished to show by some token how much he had appreciated the honour conferred on him in 1925, so he offered to present the Academy with a specially bound copy of the hand-made paper edition of the Dialect Dictionary when the Academy should move to its new home in the building of the Civil Service Commission, Burlington Gardens. Sir Israel Gollancz, writing to accept the gift on behalf of the Academy (Dec. 4, 1927), said: ' . . . Your work, when the rooms are completed (in some six months' time), will have a place of high and well-merited honour among the precious possessions of the Academy. I know that not only will this gift be cherished by your *Fach-leute*, but also by every other Fellow of the Academy, and not least by our beloved President.'<sup>3</sup> So please in due course, bestow on us your handsome gift!' The volumes were duly sent to be in readiness for the ceremony on July 24, 1928, when the British Academy took formal possession of its new quarters, and at the same time celebrated the eightieth birthday of its President, Lord Balfour. For reasons of health Joseph Wright did not dare risk the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *The Times*, June 16, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Hon. Secretary, Director of the Survey, and one of two Editors of the English Place-Name Society.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Balfour.

excitement and fatigue of taking part in the day's proceedings, much as he wished to be present, so that he never saw his great work in the new Council Room. When Sir Israel Gollancz wrote to me in March 1930, in the name of the Fellows of the British Academy, he said: ' . . . They are proud to know that your revered husband was deeply interested in the fortunes of our Body, of which he was so illustrious a Fellow. His eminent achievements in the field of Philology, and especially in English Philology, place him among the greatest scholars of our age. His monumental Dictionary of English Dialects, which holds a foremost position in our Council Room, will for all time be regarded as a cherished contribution by a Master Mind towards the study of English folk-speech.'



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### HOME LIFE

#### I. THE CHILDREN

THE earlier chapters which describe how I came to meet Joseph Wright in Oxford, and tell of our engagement, carried on our personal history up to the date of our marriage in 1896. In this, my last chapter, I propose to go back to that point, and pick up the threads of our home life which I have let slip into the background whilst following Joseph Wright's literary and academic career. I have tried to show him as a scholar amongst his books, and as a teacher amongst his pupils, I want now to recall the time when he was the father of children. Some one who knew him well, writing of him in March 1930, said: 'The true gentleness of his spirit was best seen in the touching generosity of his enjoyment of children. His characteristic bluff geniality melted then into all the tenderness of a father who had lost his own; and so speaking of his boy and girl with the pride and joy of the past strong upon him, without bitterness, and without envy, the living would wake up the dead. There must be many, though the War—in the enemy's ranks as well as in our own—has lessened their number, who when they read of the death of Professor Wright, will look back on their youth at Oxford and remember him first of all for his fatherliness.'<sup>1</sup>

One of his early pupils in Oxford—Miss Hadow, now Principal of the Oxford Home Students—wrote to me in March 1930: 'Dr. Wright remains one of our precious memories of Oxford, and I can see him now playing cricket with Mary in the garden. I know he was a great scholar, but it is the other side of him that many of us like to remember.'

Our little daughter was born on August 11, 1897, and never was a baby welcomed by deeper paternal love. When people

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, March 4, 1930.



MARY  
Aged three months



asked us why we called our two children William and Mary, Joseph Wright would reply that we named them after the Prince of Orange and his consort. Our real method of choice was simple. We went systematically through the alphabet, weighing up our likes and dislikes of names for a boy or girl from A to W. It gratified the members of the Wright family in Yorkshire that 'no fancy names' had been selected. Joseph Wright was firm on the point of giving only *one* name: 'If a child of mine has to sign his or her name as often as I have had to sign mine, he or she will be thankful to have it short.' Yorkshire parents have a pleasant habit of prefixing a possessive pronoun to the names of their children. Its use is also extended within the family circle. I remember a bachelor uncle from Windhill once patting Mary on the head and saying: 'Isn't our Mary *grand*!' Joseph Wright began by referring to Mary as 'our barn' [=child], and when the second baby came she was 'our Mary'. His devotion to her even in her babyhood can be seen in the following extracts from our letters in March 1898, when I took her to stay with my mother and sisters at West Kirby. He wrote to me every day during the ten days' time we were parted, and I wrote twice daily. We thought it was my duty to go, and Joseph Wright was too busy to leave the 'Workshop' for longer than the brief holiday we had planned to take together at Barmouth after the West Kirby visit.

*Langdale House, Oxford. March 22, 1898.*

I have just had tea at the Workshop, but did *not* feel inclined to work on, so I came away at 4.30!! I do hope you and our dear barn had a good journey. Pray give her a kiss from me *at once*. The house looks terribly deserted, and I just feel like a fish out of water. . . .

*West Kirby. March 22, 1898.*

Here is something you have never had before! Namely, a letter from your wife. . . . I hate being parted from you, but mercifully it won't be for long. . . .

*Oxford. March 23, 1898.*

Your two letters were a great treat, but they cannot be said to make up in any way for the great loss I have sustained. . . . How proud you must have been of our barn for having been so good all the way. . . . I shall perhaps get into this changed state of life in time, but it *will* require time, and much of it too. . . .

*West Kirby. March 23, 1898.*

. . . Poor Lammie thought for a moment that a bearded man in spectacles who called this afternoon, was her beloved father. Her little face lighted up as it never does at the sight of anybody else, only she soon found out her mistake, and her smile died away at once. I was quite sorry for the poor little soul to be so disappointed. . . . I suppose I shall get on somehow, and I feel it is horrid of me not to be happier . . . they don't know what a less-than-half life I lead here. . . .

*Oxford. March 24, 1898.*

. . . I wish I could write a decent letter, but somehow my brain won't 'pan to' as they say at home. So long as I am at the Press things go on pretty well, but when I get home I am simply dazed, and seem to have lost you and my barn altogether. I dread Sunday coming, it will be the worst day of all. . . .

*West Kirby. March 24, 1898.*

I wish I could come back to you at once. It seems just ages since I came here, and still greater ages till next Thursday. . . . Other husbands and wives can't be as much 'one' as we are, else they could never separate so easily and so often. . . .

*Oxford. March 25, 1898.*

We have a half-holiday today, but the weather is so wretched that I shall not make use of it. Perhaps you are having bitter weather, it is miserably cold here. I have just had an invitation to dine in Exeter College on Sunday evening to meet some friends who have heard that I am disengaged!! . . . I am very pleased to hear that our barn continues to be so well. . . . It will

require some care to prevent her catching cold if she goes out much in this weather. I know however, that you will take good care of our precious jewel. . . . I miss both of you dreadfully. . . . We will try not to get into this 'predicament' again for a long time to come. Our married life does not resemble that of other people, so they can form no opinion about us. It is just such a life as was essential to me, none other would have satisfied my yearnings in the least. . . .

*West Kirby. March 25, 1898.*

. . . I am glad you are going out on Saturday and Sunday. I won't leave you again if I can at all help it, it is dreadful for us both. . . . I am quite lost apart from you. I cannot even be myself, for I am no longer a separate individual. And I know you feel just the same. . . .

*Oxford. March 26, 1898.*

. . . I am much pleased to hear that our Lammie has begun to eat biscuits. Give her a kiss from me at once and tell her how much her poor old dad misses her. I do miss her very much, in spite of her *youth*! Someday when she is bigger, I will tell her how you both once left me sorrowing at home. Your description of how she eats biscuit reminds me of the episode in *Otfrid* about Adam, Eve, and the *apple*. . . .

I thought I should get through lots of work during your absence, but the opposite is the case, I do a good deal less. . . . My throat is all right again now. All I require is to be with my dear wife and lammie. I have no other wishes or desires. . . .

*West Kirby. March 26, 1898.*

. . . It is very nice that Lammie behaves so nicely, they all think her so good. Mrs. Jane [the old family nurse] always says: 'None of you were so good as babies.' . . . I am quite well as far as my body is concerned, but there seems a great big emptiness in life . . . we can't live separate lives now. . . .

*Oxford. March 27, 1898.*

. . . It is so good of you to write twice a day and to tell me so much about yourself and our dear Lammie. . . . *We* both

thought you were doing the right and most natural thing, but we were somewhat mistaken, and we will take good care that the mistake does not occur again for a very very long time to come. We will lead our own lives in our own way. . . . The moral to be drawn from the fable of the old man and the ass is the best motto I know. It is the one I have always acted upon, and it has at least the one merit that one person is pleased and satisfied.

Dining out is small comfort to me. . . . People little know when I amuse them and seem in the best of spirits, that there is a deeply ingrained sadness beneath it all. Without you I feel like the most forlorn creature under the sun. I ought to be doing lots of work, but it is an effort even to do the ordinary correspondence connected with the Dictionary. . . .

*West Kirby. March 27, 1898.*

. . . Lammie is getting so strong now that she can sit bolt upright in a chair. Yesterday I gave her a piece of biscuit to quiet her clamourings whilst Jane was cooking up her bottle, and Lammie found it very pleasant, till she beheld the bottle, but she then forthwith flung the biscuit aside, and stretched out both hands for her old and trusted friend! There was no question as to which she preferred. You see she takes after her good father, and has always a decided mind on any subject of any importance to her. . . .

I was thinking of you in church, and what a very good husband I had been married to beneath that roof! But that event seems to have happened years and years ago, so completely are we now 'man and wife' as the Prayer Book puts it. . . .

*Oxford. March 28, 1898.*

. . . The weather has been quite mild today, so I suppose our dear barn will have been out a bit. I do so much like reading about her in your most interesting letters. After this long absence I shall hardly know her, for I am sure she will have grown a lot. . . .

*West Kirby. March 28, 1898.*

. . . If I had not Lammie there is no saying what I should feel like! Nothing seems really of interest. . . . Do you remember how we used to say before we were married that you would work more, and not less, for having a wife? And now it is shown to be a fact. But still, that is no compensation for this present separation.

Mrs. Jane was much pleased by your message, indeed it so gratified her, that she went so far as to say: 'One of you was more trouble in ten minutes than this baby is in a whole day!!' . . .

*Oxford. March 29, 1898.*

. . . I shall only be at the Workshop for an hour or two tomorrow. And then on the following day I shall meet my darling Lizzie and dear Lammie. . . . The weather is most beautiful here today, it is so warm, and the birds are singing wonderfully in the gardens. I *shall* rejoice when my train arrives at Ruabon at 3.1. . . . I wish tomorrow were Thursday, but never mind, this kind of thing will not happen again for a very long time. Life is much too short for us to be separated for long again. . . .

*West Kirby. March 29, 1898.*

. . . Your whistling evidently remains vividly in Lammie's mind, for today E. happened to whistle to her, a thing no one here had done to her before, and little Lammie's face beamed all over, in the way it only does for you; only then she looked puzzled, because it was only E. Still, it showed she had not forgotten her 'old Dad'. . . . I am not perpetually miserable, because I have our bright little darling, and you have not even that comfort. . . . But it all goes to show that what we thought before we were married, of what life together would be, has all come perfectly true. Only, as I have said before, this separation was not necessary as a proof of that. . . .

*Oxford. March 30, 1898.*

. . . I now feel that we shall be together again very soon; it has seemed such a long long time since you left me. . . .



*West Kirby. March 30, 1898.*

This is the last letter. How thankful I am! Lammie sends you her best love, and says she will be very glad to see you, and hopes you will take more notice of her than her mother does, who seems at the present moment to be stone deaf. The angel is trying her best to attract my attention, instead of going to sleep. She is just trying a new game in the spluttering line, which she finds very amusing. I know if *you* were here, you would play with her!! . . .

Don't go and make plans for continuing this recent high-pressure rate of work at the Dictionary. You have really worked much too hard lately. Several people here have told me that Barmouth is such a pretty place for walks. So I am looking forward to our having a lovely time together, if only the weather favours us. You shan't work much! . . . I can hardly believe it is only a little more than a week, it seems ages since we parted. . . . You must whistle to Lammie '*at once*', to give her all the aids to memory you can. *I* don't think she will have forgotten you. . . .

Further references to Mary in her babyhood are contained in letters I had from her father when he was away for a few days in June of this same year, 1898, when the University of Durham was about to confer upon him a D.C.L. Degree. He stayed one night at the Castle, and then went to Windhill to see his mother:

*Windhill. June 11, 1898.*

. . . I left [Durham] to catch the 10.30 train, and arrived here at 1.30, just in time for dinner with my Mother and Tom. I think my Mother looks wonderfully well for her years, and I need hardly add how very pleased she was to see me and to hear all about Lizzie and Mary. I miss you both dreadfully, and it cost no small amount of effort to say that I would come to Durham on the 21st for the commemoration. . . . I do wish it were Monday in the morning, it seems such a long time to wait for a sight of my dear dear Lizzie and *our* Mary. . . .

*Windhill. June 12, 1898.*

I was so pleased to get your letter this morning, and to hear that Mary's new tooth is 'out'. It was my intention to go for a nice walk this morning, but I got up too late, and then since I got up there has been a constant stream of folk dropping in, so that a walk was out of the question. . . .

My Mother asks me all sorts of questions about Lizzie and Mary. She seems to think and talk about nothing else hardly. I tell all sorts of 'tit bits' about Mary's ways, and then she says: 'Wā, its dzust laik wot ta ius tə diu' [= Why, its just like what you used to do]! It's funny how much interest she takes in telling what I was like as a baby. I hope you will give a kiss to our dear barn *at once* from her old dad who expects to see her before 5 o'clock tomorrow. I am just like a fish out of water, and seem to have been ages away from you.

I do hope you had a nice time on the river yesterday, but I suppose it was not quite the same as if I had been with you. It is useless to attempt a proper letter, I am too distracted with the noise of people in the house. . . .

On July 16, 1898, our son was born. We could now rejoice over the possession of 'one of each sort', as their father proudly boasted—'a pigeon pair', as the country folk said. Joseph Wright was doubtless remembering this event, when nearly thirty years later, at the end of a business letter to a Dutch Professor, he wrote: 'We are very pleased to hear of the addition to your family. Now that you have one of each sort you cannot help feeling very proud.'

Mary was then eleven months old, and could only say a few words. She had been told that the new baby was a boy, and when she was carried down from her nursery to see him, she said at once: 'Oh! ze Boy!' Henceforward she always called him Boy, and after a season of Bill and William, we adopted Mary's name of Boy, and later her Willie Boy. When he grew old enough to talk about himself, he always spoke of himself in the third person as 'Boy'. Mary would say when she was put

into her cot at night: 'Are you asleep, Boy?' and a drowsy little voice from the other cot would be heard saying: 'Yes, Mary. Boy *is* asleep.' As soon as they could talk they both adopted—or inherited—their father's Yorkshire habit of constantly introducing the name of the person addressed in conversation.

When Boy was about two months old, his digestion was upset by some terribly hot weather, and we became very anxious about him, he looked so white and wasted. It is a curious fact that people take every opportunity of drawing a mother's attention to the baby's condition if at all unfavourable, when these same persons would not dream of criticizing her taste in drawing-room decoration, or of telling her that her front door needed a coat of paint, though their strictures on such items would scarcely touch the surface of her feelings. When I was out with Boy at this stage, I used to turn a corner of his coverlet over his face when passing somebody I knew. In time a careful system of giving him very small quantities of food at frequent intervals enabled his really strong constitution to overcome the trouble, and at seven months old he was once more a thriving child, with no trace of the previous weakness. Indeed, this illness is not worth recording here, except in so far as it explains parts of two letters I had from Joseph Wright when he went to speak about the Dialect Dictionary at Bradford on September 17. These letters show how his fatherly interest in everything connected with his children—down to a double perambulator, and condensed milk—was never excluded from his mind by outside interests and activities.

*Windhill. Sep. 17, 1898.*

What a journey! and 50 minutes late into the bargain. The train was packed all the way. At Birmingham I had an hour to wait, so I went hunting for perambulator shops. I saw several, but none of them would suit our purpose. The shop-people say it does not pay to keep the kind we require in stock. I hope to try again on Monday. It is now nearly 5 o'clock and I have to be at Bradford at 6.30, so unfortunately there is no time for a proper letter. . . .

My Mother seems pretty well, but the excessive heat seems to have told upon her. I am afraid you are feeling like myself—miserable! . . .

*Windhill. Sep. 18, 1898.*

It is a great comfort to hear that Dr. — does not think 'badly' of Bill's condition. From what you said about the milk yesterday morning, and from my own observations of the pasture-land on the road to Birmingham, I am now quite certain that the milk is greatly at fault. All along the line the grass in the fields was burnt up. If Bill is not much better by this, I think we ought at least to give the condensed milk a trial. One of the local doctors called here this morning for a chat; he thinks barley-water—if properly prepared—is a most excellent thing for babies. There is nothing like picking up information where possible. I have been making enquiries here about the use of condensed milk for babies, and find it is frequently used for that purpose. . . . My Mother is quite excited at the idea of seeing you and her grandchildren. . . .

At the end of 1898, and again at the beginning of 1899, I left him in charge of the babies for a day or two, when I went to see my mother in her last illness, and when she died on January 14, 1899. He wrote to me:

*Oxford. Dec. 27, 1898.*

I am afraid you must have been tired out long before the end of your journey; and the wretched weather must have added to your discomfort. It has rained all day. When I got back from the station I was drenched outside, but was feeling in very low water inside! Mary misses you very much too; I had a good big fire made in the study in order to have her down there after tea. I wrapped her well up in a shawl to bring her downstairs. After a bit it occurred to her that she *must* have the kok-ə-dūdldū book, and she was like the boy in the advertisement of Pears' Soap; she would not be good (quiet) until she got it. . . . She has mirth, energy, and vitality enough for half a dozen children of her age. I think they have both been *model*

children (!) considering the weather. There is, I am sure, no need for you to feel anxious about them. . . .

*Oxford. Dec. 28, 1898.*

. . . William and Mary have been unusually good today. I hardly ever remember such a beautiful day for the time of year. They went out this morning before 11 o'clock and were out until one; then they were out again before 2 and came in punctually at 3. I am sure that the warm sun and pleasant air will have done them much good. Mary's cold has practically disappeared and she is shouting just now at the top of her voice: Mama, Mama. And when I tell her Mama will soon be here she runs to the door! I played with Bill this afternoon and he was so good and cheerful, in fact he was very much pleased with himself. . . . I had a most beautiful walk today—nearly to Wheatley and back,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. You would have been shocked with my appetite at dinner. . . . If it is fine again tomorrow, I shall take another long walk. But walks with other people are not like those with my good wife. *ē!* I *shall* be pleased to see you again. Unless I hear to the contrary I shall meet you at the 4.8 train tomorrow afternoon. . . .

*Oxford. Jan. 13, 1899.*

William and Mary have been very good and are now both asleep (6 p.m.). . . . I *was* sad at parting with you this afternoon. . . . If your Mother is sufficiently well to receive my kind love and assurance that I will be a good husband to her daughter, I shall be very grateful if you will tell her. . . . P.S. I will kiss W. and M. for you in the morning.

The following descriptions and stories of Boy are taken from a short Life of him which I wrote in 1902, mainly for Mary's sake, because she was too young to remember much about her brother in after years. The book was printed for private circulation, and has been read only by friends.

He was a splendid baby, with a big broad chest and shoulders and a well-developed head. From the time he was seven



WILLIE BOY, aged one year, MARY, aged two



months old onwards he was always bigger and stronger than an average child of the same age, indeed he seemed to be the very essence of health and strength. He was left-handed like his father, and when he was old enough to kick a ball, we noticed that he was also left-legged. He was a thorough *boy* from the very beginning. As soon as he could walk he began climbing chairs, and when he was playing in the garden he always preferred clambering about the steps to safe games on the lawn. With intent to warn him against the dangers of such practices, I invented moral tales about the patients in 'Aunt Margaret's Hospital'. They were all little boys and girls who had fallen off chairs, down steps, or out of bed, or who had sucked the paint off the animals in their Noah's Arks, and Aunt Margaret had to wrap them up in rags and cotton-wool—(Boy always said 'cotton-reels')—and put them to bed. Boy listened most attentively, and wanted to hear it all over again. He missed the moral, but he enjoyed the tale. From the time he first learned to run about by himself he was always busy. Unless he was asleep he must be doing something. Owing to his naturally happy disposition he was very clever at amusing himself, and would entertain himself quietly on the floor without disturbing his elders. He developed a curious little habit of tearing up his picture-books, and any pieces of paper he could find, into tiny bits which he secretly carried into the adjoining night-nursery, and tucked away in an obscure corner. The nurse fetched me once to look at a little hoard, almost like a mouse's nest. It made us think he would one day be a great collector. He never really outgrew the destructive stage, though latterly he came to respect his books: 'Sure Boy won't tear it up, if you give Boy another puff-puff [= train] book.' Many a doll of Mary's came to an untimely end at the hand of Boy. Mary never minded very much; indeed, once when the nurse was busy in the bedroom, Mary invited Boy to hammer one of her dolls to bits. Needless to say Boy accepted the invitation with joy, and quickly sought out his wooden hammer. When the deed was done they pretended to be frightened at



the crushed remains. Boy put half a hand over one eye and ran to the other side of the room, saying: 'Don't look at it Mary. I wouldn't look at it if I were you.'

Though he was but a baby when the (Boer) War broke out in October, 1899, he seemed to catch something of the general patriotic feeling of the day. I remember one Sunday night when he and Mary were in bed, he kept asking me to do something, and I could not understand what he said; at last I said to Mary, 'What does Boy say?' She explained at once, 'He says, sing "Soldiers of the Queen"'. As Boy spoke plain English long before he was two, this must have been very early in his life. Later he developed a great affection for the National Anthem. I used to sing something to him almost every night when he was in bed and Mary was having her bath, and when I asked, 'What shall I sing to-night?' he constantly said, 'Sing "God Save the Queen"'. At the time of Queen Victoria's death he took an immense interest in the series of Special Numbers of *The Sphere*, and the day of the funeral made a great impression on him, though not in the least a gloomy one. He often talked afterwards of the closed shops, the houses with blinds drawn down, and the 'muffled peals'. Indeed, he used to ask if we could not have a 'Queen's Funeral Day' over again.

I have often heard it stated that all children are by nature afraid of the dark. If this is so, then Boy was a brilliant exception to the rule—he never showed the slightest fear of the dark. When he was just two years old we were all travelling to Settle (August, 1900), and there happened to be no lights in the carriage when we went through the first long tunnel. Boy was sitting on his nurse's knee, and as we emerged into the daylight again he remarked in a tone of calm indignation: 'Naughty man to come and pull the blinds down!' One might have expected a sudden darkness like that would seem to him supernatural, but instead of that, he found a rational explanation of it from his own experience of the way darkness was produced.

He was always so active and adventurous that he had many a tumble, but he bore his bruises and 'scrazes' manfully, though

he liked to be pitied. Sometimes he would come and say pathetically: 'Aren't you sorry for Boy?' when it was necessary to inquire why one was expected to be 'sorry for' him. It was when he was not much hurt that he cried longest; when his mind was not distracted by real pain, he liked occasionally to cultivate crying as a fine art. It was not easy for even a practised listener to tell where the cry ceased to be genuine and became artificial. One day he was lamenting a tumble, and Mary tried to console him, saying, 'Come and build a nice puff-puff, Boy'. Boy stopped suddenly, and said in his ordinary voice: 'Wait till Boy has done his cry, Mary, and then Boy will come.' He then continued to cry for a few minutes, then stopped again and said cheerfully: 'Now Boy has done his cry, Boy will come and build a puff-puff.' His whole disposition was so sunny and cheerful that he could not be sad, any more than he could be naughty. His naughtiness was simply the self-assertion of a sturdy young creature trying to resist authority, and it never lasted for more than a few minutes. He would very soon give in, and of his own accord say: 'Boy's going to be good now', and he would immediately be as sweet and happy as if nothing had occurred to disturb his happiness. He was essentially dramatic and full of humour. He could at any moment assume a sad or lively expression. I have a vivid recollection of starting out with him in his mail-cart one day when he could not make up his mind whether or not to take his painted hoop. At last I said we could wait no longer and must leave it behind. Boy did not say much, but he looked glum, and altogether too melancholy to take the least interest in anything in the street. We got as far as the Banbury Road, and then I said that if he was really sorry for refusing the hoop when I offered it to him, I would go back and let him fetch it. In an instant his face changed: 'Boy will be a glad Boy now', and his 'glad' look would have done credit to a professional comedian.

It was impossible to be dull where Boy was, he was such a talker, and so entertaining withal. His grandmother used to say of him: 'His tongue never ligs.' Life to him was full of

interest and excitement, and he wanted to share his enjoyment of it all with other people. Many a time when he came down to the study after tea, he would run up to his father and say: 'Dada, what d'you think Boy saw when Boy was out?' or 'What d'you think Boy did this afternoon?' Then would follow a lengthy recital beginning: 'When Boy was out this afternoon, Boy saw', &c., and ending up with: 'Wasn't that funny?' or if it was some deed or speech of his own, with: 'Wasn't that funny of Boy?' He had no false modesty about laughing at his own jokes, and his funds of laughter were inexhaustible.

A casual mention on the part of his nurse of her own real nephews led Boy to create his imaginary ones. It began with one each. Boy called his nephew Duffer, Mary's was called Taffy. They lived in separate corners of the bedroom. Boy tore pieces out of his picture-books to take as 'notes' to them. Later there grew to be several 'nephews', characterized by shockingly bad behaviour. They were constantly disobedient, quarrelsome, and 'cru'l'. We were expected to be thrilled with horror at every fresh recital of their misdemeanours. I remember one day when I was wheeling Boy out in his mail-cart, he suddenly observed in the middle of nothing: 'All Boy's nephews are gone to Aunt Margaret's hospital: they've been eating knives.' Even to us who lived with him he was a constant source of wonder and surprise. The commonest incidents would strike him in an uncommon way, as, for instance, when I was once shopping in North Parade with the children, we met Uncle Henry, and he took off his hat to Boy. 'Now', said Boy, 'take off your coat.' He evidently thought that if divesting one's person of an article of apparel was a form of greeting, the multiplication of the articles thus removed must make the greeting the more emphatic.

A German Professor who called on Joseph Wright in September 1901, wrote home to his wife describing our two children as follows: 'Wrights have two children, two lively little people, a girl about five and a sturdy boy of three, a droll little fellow. I had been playing with him, and when he was



MRS. WRIGHT WITH HER TWO GRANDCHILDREN

1900



fetches to go to bed, he said: "Thank you for having played with Boy." And then a moment later: "*You* must say: Thank you for having played with Dr. Horn."

He had a thirst for books, and his memory was marvellous. Whenever he had a new book he used to say: 'Tell Boy about it', or 'Read it to Boy', and then: 'Read it to Boy again.' After several repetitions he generally knew the contents by heart. In this way he learned all the nursery rhymes and numbers of others besides. He knew several of Halliwell's alphabets—'A was an Archer', 'A apple-pie', &c.—besides a 'Motor-car' alphabet in preposterous couplets, and an illustrated Biblical one which began with Abraham and ended with Zacharias, which he recited with only the pictures to help him. He was very fond of Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*, and could repeat the whole of 'My tea is nearly ready', the poem he called 'Learie'. He learnt his letters when Mary did, beginning in the autumn of 1901. It all began with the mat on which they had their nightly tub, inscribed BATH MAT. Then these letters were sought for at street corners, and new ones added. Boy never got beyond that. What he called 'reading' was his name for reciting from an open page. I used to teach them hymns and bits of good poetry. I remember one striking instance of the way a tiny child can catch hold of a poet's thought: I was out with both children, and they were picking daisies in a field. Suddenly a lark went up singing, and I said to Mary—who was then four years old—'Look, Mary! That's "Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings".' Mary gazed, and gazed; then, pointing upwards, she shouted: 'He's *in*! He's *in*!'

Boy had very little idea of tune, his 'singing' was a sort of cheerful recitative, very pleasant to hear, like the sound of a brook in summer. When he was playing among his toys in the nursery, he would 'sing' snatches of hymns and rhymes all mixed up together, stopping every now and again to say: 'Wasn't that a pretty song, Nanna!'

I am sure Boy had the makings of a scholar in him, because his powers of memory were coupled with an almost pedantic

love of accuracy; only he had too much genuine humour to be pedantic. He would correct anybody for inaccurate statements. On one occasion he corrected his father for using the Yorkshire pronunciation of the vowel *u*. 'Dada said *booket*!' said Boy, with the gentle laugh of one possessed of superior wisdom. It is difficult to describe the way he did it. He seemed half surprised, half indignant at the ignorance of the speaker, and wishful to set him right for accuracy's sake, and not from personal pride and vanity. He was much fascinated by the pictures in *Living Animals*, which we bought when it came out. He knew the names of a number of the animals. 'It's not a *bison*, it's a *yak*', I remember him telling his father. One way in which his retentive and accurate memory showed itself was in his singular aptitude for putting together dissected puzzles. The first box of them was given him when he was nearly two and a half (Christmas, 1900-1), and from that time onwards he never ceased to like them. It was generally a Sunday pastime to do puzzles. Boy began as soon as he was dressed in the morning, and he would sit on the floor and work at them by the hour. In course of time he knew how to fit together at least fifteen different pictures. He would empty out the boxes on to the floor, scrape together into one heap all the different pieces, and then start making the separate pictures, arranging them when completed in a row before him. We always expected that he would make his way in the world with his brains. When he was three and a half he decided that he was going to be 'a fesser' [Professor]. Once he said to me quite seriously, looking up from a game of bricks on the nursery floor: 'When Boy is big, Boy will say Lizzie.' 'Whom shall you say it to?' I asked. 'Boy will say it to you.' This he said without the least touch of disrespect towards me. He thought it the natural prerogative of a grown-up 'fesser'. A few days later Mary was telling somebody: 'Boy is going to be a fesser when he's big.' 'Yes', added Boy, 'and say Lizzie'. Mary's feminine eye pictured him wearing a cap and gown. 'I suppose', she said once when we were passing the Taylor Institution, 'that when Boy is a fesser he

will go to meetings with Dada'. His father used to tell Boy he was made for a bishop, but that was because he looked so benevolent, and his figure was so well adapted to set off the apron and gaiters, not because he showed any ecclesiastical tendencies. It was not only we who spoke of Boy as benevolent, other people said the very same thing of him. He just beamed with kindness towards man and beast. He was genuinely distressed if he saw an animal that was ill or hurt, and towards human beings he showed an inborn consideration far beyond his years. I remember so well with what sweet courtesy he treated Agnes, 'the new Nanna', when she first came (November 27, 1900. Boy was then two years and four months old). She was awaiting the children in the nursery, as they came in from their afternoon walk. I brought them upstairs myself, fearing they might be shy at first; but it was Boy who made the situation easy and pleasant for everybody. He greeted Agnes with his usual open-hearted smile, and started at once to entertain her by conversation. 'Boy has buttons on Boy's Sunday gloves', he said, as he held out his hands for her to take off his week-day woollen ones. Then, when all his out-door things had been removed, he went up to her and said, 'Would you like to see how Boy can run?' Of course Agnes said she would, so he set off and ran vigorously up and down the nursery two or three times, with his head bent a little forward as was his habit when running, 'That's how Boy can run', he said. I found it was quite unnecessary for me to stay in the room, as Mary followed Boy's lead, and shyness was out of the question. But my favourite illustration of Boy's chivalrous nature is the following oft-repeated story. It was one Sunday night (May 1901), when Agnes had gone to church, Emily (the cook) came to fetch Boy to bed, and offered to carry him up the stairs. 'Are you still a poor-poor, Em'ly?' said Boy, remembering that she had been poorly. 'Yes, Boy', replied Emily. 'Aren't you any better, Em'ly?' 'Not much, Boy.' 'Then Boy will *walk* upstairs', and off he tramped sturdily up to the nursery by himself. On another occasion, not quite a year later, the nurse and children



were taking Emily to see the deer at Magdalen. Before they set out, Boy said to Emily: 'It's rather dark somewhere where we go [he meant the cloisters], but if Boy holds your hand you won't mind, you won't be frightened then, Em'ly? Boy will take care of you.' When they entered the cloisters, Boy gripped Emily's hand tightly, and held it so till they came out into the Gardens. 'You don't mind *now*, do you, Em'ly?', and with that he ran off by himself. It was little acts like this which made us feel that we should see our son grow up to be one of this world's noblest creatures, strong and powerful in body and mind, yet full of gentle tenderness and manly courtesy. Nobody could help admiring Boy, old men and maidens, young men and children felt the spell of his beautiful personality. There was a charm about him which fascinated people when he looked up at them with his big blue eyes and radiant smile. He possessed in a singularly high degree that power of enlisting the sympathy of others which goes to form part of the character of those who become leaders of men.

In February 1902 I had an attack of influenza, and though I kept myself rigidly apart from the children it spread to them. As soon as they were better and downstairs, their father suggested to them the exciting thought that a visit to the sea-side would do them and me good. They had never seen the sea, nor known the joys of digging on its shores, so the prospect filled them with delight. We fixed on Weston-super-Mare. Although it was March, the weather was wonderfully sunny and warm, the children were able to be out all day, and the bracing air very soon did away with all traces of influenza. Meanwhile Joseph Wright was very lonesome at home. I quote from his daily letters to me:

*Oxford. March 11, 1902.*

How I miss you all! But I am getting on pretty well, I think, considering the circumstances. I stayed at the Workshop to tea, and the Assistants commiserated with me most cordially. . . .

*Oxford. March 12, 1902.*

... I am trying very hard to 'keep a bold front', but it is not always very easy, especially when I am in the house. I seem as if I had been suddenly plunged into unknown regions and deprived of everything worth having. ...

*Oxford. March 13, 1902.*

It was such a treat to get your letter this morning. In fact the mere thought of seeing a letter from [you] is a wonderful stimulant in the morning. ... I am eagerly looking forward to tomorrow when I shall start. It is a pity I cannot get away in the morning, but I am afraid of getting so far behindhand with the Assistants' work. ...

*Oxford. March 17, 1902.*

Just a line to say that I arrived punctually in Oxford at 5.30. I was so sad to leave you, because we were both having such a nice time together. The house looks so cheerless without you and the babes, but I'll try to look fairly happy until Saturday. ... Kiss our dear little ones from me. ...

*Oxford. March 18, 1902.*

Your letter was most welcome at my solitary breakfast table this morning. ... I always seem to manage to get on somehow until supper-time, and then it's impossible to settle down to work again. I am going this evening to see Mr. —. ...

*Oxford. March 19, 1902.*

... I am eagerly looking forward to next Saturday, *but* if you really find that you are making good progress, I will do my level best to spare you a few days beyond Saturday. I shall be glad to hear what you think of this proposal when you next write. ...

*Oxford. March 20, 1902.*

... I do hope it will be such a *long long* time before we are separated again. Everything seems so lifeless. ... I shall come to the station on Saturday morning in order to get sight of you as soon as possible. ...

*Oxford. March 21, 1902.*

I hardly thought you would be willing to stop at W. over Sunday. . . . I will be at the station in the morning to give you a most hearty welcome back again! How very glad I shall be to 'clap' eyes on you again. . . .

The children and I duly returned on March 22. I had written: 'It is just like your goodness to propose our staying on, but I really couldn't exist any longer without my old man. . . . I have no desire whatever to stay. . . . It is all very nice, and it is delightful to see the children improving daily, but all the same, everything is a bit like "salt which hath lost his savour". . . .'

On April 5 Joseph Wright and I started off to Edinburgh, where we spent a day or two before going on to Aberdeen where he was to receive the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws. We very seldom left the children, and when we did, it was each time like going through a surgical operation; but little children live in the present only, and to them our departure was an exciting event. The nurse wrote to us daily, and other kind friends visited the children and sent glowing accounts of their health and spirits. We had left Aberdeen and gone to Forres, where we were very happy among the pine-woods, in gloriously sunny weather. On the morning of April 16, when we went down to breakfast, we found a postcard from the nurse saying: 'The children are quite well.' As we turned away some one said: 'Have you seen your telegram?' It was from our friend Mrs. Mayhew in Oxford, and had been sent off at 7 a.m.: 'Boy ill. Come at once.' We telegraphed to the doctor asking what was the matter, and made ready to catch the next train at 11.15. The doctor's telegram reached us on our way to the station: 'Convulsions. Come at once.' At Kingussie we telegraphed to the nurse: 'Tell us the worst. Wire to Perth, care of station-master.' We arrived at Perth at 3 p.m., and found this message awaiting us: 'Passed away early this morning, unconscious.' That was how the news came to us.

They told us afterwards what had happened. Boy woke up on the morning of April 15, to all appearance as well and happy as usual. He was interested in a tiny spot on one knee, which the nurse supposed to be a gnat-bite, of no importance, for he could not tell on which knee it was without looking for it. About midday he became drowsy and feverish, and the spot was strangely inflamed. The nurse sent for the doctor, and then for Mrs. Mayhew, and her sister who was a professional hospital nurse. Boy gradually became more and more drowsy, and in the evening, as he slept, he passed into a state of coma which lasted till just after midnight. They called it 'acute blood-poisoning'. Some who are qualified to judge said it had been produced by the bite of an insect that had been feeding on rank poison. There was a kind of relief in this theory of the insect-bite, because in that case, it was like a direct dispensation from above, which no human power could foresee or prevent. But whatever the cause of the illness, we had at least this comfort in thinking of our Boy, that *he* had no suffering.

We travelled all that day and night, with long pauses waiting for trains, and reached home at 8 a.m. on the 17th. I can remember how we sat for hours in a cheerless waiting-room at Paddington, listening to the mail-vans rumbling outside. But we knew we could do nothing, even if there had been no delay anywhere. It was some time on that long journey that Joseph Wright told me of his most treasured scheme. He had secretly planned to save money enough for the special purpose of buying his grandfather's farm, to give to our Willie Boy for his own.

Mary came down the garden path to meet us. She had grown all at once out of the irresponsible child into a kind and comforting little maiden. She missed Boy, sometimes painfully so, we could see that. It was months before she would look at any of the favourite books associated with the evening readings in the study, and it was only after the summer holiday in Yorkshire that she would play with his toys, and break the silence of the house by following his habit of singing over his

play. Mary was almost old-maidish in some of her ways. She liked to keep her playthings and treasures neatly packed in boxes. It hurt one to go into the nursery if only to see how *tidy* it was when Boy was gone, and only Mary reigned there. Still, whatever Mary's own feelings were, she was quite happy about Boy, and told us simply and cheerfully her quaint and pretty thoughts about his new life 'in the sky'. She thought of him as in a beautiful place, where it would be nice for us all to go and join him 'in the summer'. She asked us if he had a wheelbarrow there, as if she fancied him provided with the toys he loved best on earth; but there were other things which he would not need in heaven.

I think it was the day we came home that she said at dinner-time: 'I eat my pudding and rhubarb mixed up, Boy always ate his separately. But he won't want any pudding up there in heaven'—and she pointed towards the sky with her spoon. And again, she told 'Aunt Margaret': 'We were making knickerbockers for Boy, but he won't want them now in heaven.' The one of her fancies which I liked best was what she said the following Sunday. She had been lying on the spare-room bed for her midday sleep, and as I drew up the blind to waken her, I said: 'Why, Mary, whilst you have been asleep, it has been raining!' She pondered for a moment, and then said: 'I 'spect Boy helps God send the rain now.' It even then brought one a glimmer of pleasure to see Boy through Mary's eyes perhaps trundling his wheelbarrow in the gardens of God, and stopping every now and then to help Him let loose the heavenly fountains which should fall as rain upon the earth. How happy Boy would be! Mary knew how he loved watering here, in the warm summer evenings, when it did not matter much if he did upset half the water down his smock, and into his shoes. We told her Boy was gone to heaven, and that he was happy; the rest of her ideas were entirely her own. To her it seemed as if Boy had been wafted off to a better land just as he was, taken suddenly in one night from his earthly nursery to a heavenly one. It was some time before she could think of herself as a

separate individual apart from Boy, so she went on using the pronoun 'we'. One day a visitor asked her: 'How old are you, Mary?' and she replied, 'I'm four and a half, and Boy is three and a half, but Boy's gone up there', pointing upwards with her hand. Then, fearful lest she should have pained our friend by a too hasty expression of a sad truth, she added: 'But don't cry!' She was ready to give up her dearest possession if she could but see Boy once more. She dearly loved the puppy we bought for her, but the heaven of her imagination was not for dogs: 'We can't take him with us when we go up to Boy, we must send him back to his man then. But we may keep him till then.' She prayed nightly: 'God bless Dada, and Mama, and Willie Boy.' I fancy she never left off the habit of including his name in her prayers. Six years later she went—as she had said—'to see Boy in the summer'.

When Mary was five and a half we thought it time she began some regular lessons, so a nursery-governess was engaged, instead of a new nurse. Joseph Wright had said the governess must be an Englishwoman. He considered it a great mistake to introduce a foreigner into the nursery before the child's own native pronunciation is fixed. He had known English children in this way acquire the Continental *r* for life. He meant Mary to know foreign languages, but not before she knew her mother tongue. She had already learned to read with me, that is, I had bought illustrated reading-books, and sat over them with Mary on my knee. None of Mary's teachers could ever take to themselves the credit of controlling her attention. She always applied herself to the business in hand, whether it was reading a book or playing with the dog. She had her father's gift of concentration. He, for his part, was determined that his daughter should have every educational advantage. If she proved to have no mind for books, he said he should not send her to College, for he thought it a waste of time and money to send an unscholarly girl to the University. Mary, in that case, should have some other training, to fit her to earn her own living. Whatever she was, she was to be a worker. Mary once

said to somebody who asked her what she was going to be: 'Dada says I am to be a poor simple dressmaker!' He fully agreed with the saying that parents can make no greater sacrifice for their children than that of having a stranger to live with them for the sake of education, but he was prepared to undergo that sacrifice, and intended, when the time came, first to have a Frenchwoman for two or three years, and then a German, so that Mary should acquire a competent knowledge of both languages. He did not like the plan of sending a young girl to live abroad. She would learn more from the foreigner at home and at less cost to her parents both in money and anxiety. She was not to go to a boarding-school, any more than Willie Boy to a Public School. He believed in home life and training, that is, where good day-schools were at the parents' door, as in Oxford. If she turned out to have scholarly brains, he would send her—after she left the High School—to Holloway for a year, as a sort of half-way house between School and College. Then, with a maturer mind, she should start on her University course here, or at Cambridge. All this was in his mind before Mary was out of the nursery.

When the nursery-governess came, she was to give Mary short daily lessons in reading, writing, and drawing. Joseph Wright himself took her arithmetic in hand. It was always a favourite entertainment when out walking: 'Dada, let's do mental arithmetic.' It began with theoretical buying and selling of the dog. Joseph Wright would ask: 'If I bought Jack for two shillings, and sold him for a half-crown, how much should I gain?' Or, it might be: 'If I asked for a shilling's worth of penny stamps, how many should I get?' When Mary was upwards of eight years old, it was: 'Dada, let's have "General Knowledge" questions'; or, 'Let's do "Profit and Loss".' In Joseph Wright's opinion if a child dislikes arithmetic it is a sure sign of bad teaching. He maintained that every child takes naturally to arithmetic if the subject is treated in the right way from the start. Certainly Mary took to it like a duck to the water. I find satisfaction in supposing that my teachers were

very inferior. Mary was still very young when I said to her one Sunday: 'I think you are old enough now to listen to some of the sermon in church, and try to remember something. I shall be very pleased if you could tell me afterwards just one thing you had heard.' 'And if,' said Mary, 'I could tell you *two* things, would you be *twice* as pleased?' I used to read the Bible to her in bed at night, and I remember having to stop in the middle of the chapter about the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, because when we came to the description of his ivory throne, Mary wanted to work out exactly how the 'twelve lions' were arranged on the 'six steps'. I said the question was too complicated for bedtime study, and brought the reading to a close. She early developed a love of spelling, and would often say to me: 'Ask me to spell something.' Once, when she was of an age to read easily, she said: 'When you ask me how to spell a word, I think how it looks in a book.' Then she shut her eyes and spelt the word *picture* quite correctly. It struck me at the time as valuable corroboration out of the mouth of babes and sucklings of the theory that good spelling—at any rate of English—is primarily a matter of eyesight in early youth. Mary had some talent for drawing, and that would be a help in visualizing the printed word. It must not be thought that she was in any way a precocious and priggish child; and certainly she was never 'trotted out' to show off her paces to friends and relations. The more I think of Mary's character, the more I notice her likeness to her father. She was through and through a Wright. She had the same sunny temperament, the same faculty for enjoying simple things, the same absolute openness and honesty, coupled with unusual brain-power and originality, that her father had. She was strong and big, and so healthy that she never knew what it was to be tired, or have a headache. On one occasion, when Joseph Wright and I were coming back from a walk, as we approached the house he remarked: 'They seem to be beating carpets next door!' It really was Mary galumphing down the stairs to greet us. I used to think other people's children had more graceful manners,



and were not so like young calves, but inwardly I felt that our Mary would grow up to be one of the best of women. She was so genuine, and so straight. She simply did not understand meanness in any form whatever. A young friend from Yorkshire, then a student at Somerville, said: 'Mary was like a mountain breeze.' I said to her once after she had done an errand for me: 'It's so nice to have a little daughter old enough to go up the road and pay the butcher by herself.' 'But', said Mary, 'I kicked a stone along the pavement all the way there, and all the way back.' She felt she had been childish, and was undeserving of my praise. From the first she had her father's almost instinctive dislike of inaccuracy. It put me in a difficulty sometimes with the nursery-governess. One such lady observed at the dinner-table: 'There were dozens of carriages waiting by St. Giles' church as we came past.' Mary gently but firmly amended: 'There were *eight*.' I knew Mary's number would be the right one, but I had to explain to her that grown-ups did not like to be corrected by little girls. Some German school-teachers were once talking to us—in English—about their professional life in Germany, and happened to say: 'If the weather is very hot we have a "Feier" [= holiday].' Whereupon Mary interrupted with: '*We* have a fire when it's cold, not when it's hot!' This correction was perhaps dictated by patriotism rather than accuracy. She was naturally very observant, and often surprised us by her remarks about things she had noticed. I could always decipher difficult handwriting better than Joseph Wright could, and sometimes when German letters bothered him—especially when written in German script—he used to hand them over to me to read aloud to him. It chanced one day that something about the German language came up in conversation with a visitor. Mary, wishing to add a piece of interesting information, said helpfully: 'Dada can talk German very well, but he can't read a word! Mother has to do that for him.' It was always a pleasure to see things through her mind. I used to give her some sort of Scripture lesson on Sunday afternoons, when perhaps she would tell me

a Bible story she had heard read in church. I remember how Elisha kept 'a parlourmaid who answered the door' to Naaman; and how the woman who had lost one of her ten pieces of silver 'gave a party' when she had found it. Once, as she sat on my knee, she put her elbows on the table, and grasping a mass of her long hair in each hand, she asked quite gravely: 'Whereabouts on your hairs is it that they are all numbered?' It had never struck me before that the text, 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered', was capable of two interpretations. I had certainly never talked about it to Mary, but she had learnt to read figures from 'numbered' gates and doors in the streets, and thought out the text for herself. After the Bible discourse we went on to other subjects. I remember how impressed she was by the idea that you could hurt people by the things you said, as much or more than by doing things such as thumping them with your fist. An only child has to learn so much in the abstract, and the hardest lesson of all is unselfishness, for what the child daily experiences in practice is in flat contradiction to precept. Mary learnt her lesson easily, because from the time she was five years old, and had no longer her beloved brother, the one dominant element in her life was her love for her parents; and out of it, and alongside of it, had grown and deepened a simple religious faith, hidden and sacred, but strong and abiding. I always felt that Mary was womanly—in the best sense of the word—even whilst she was quite a tiny child. Somebody talking to her about her school and school-fellows once asked her: 'Who is your best friend, Mary?' 'Mother', said Mary, quite simply, almost as if the question had been off the subject under discussion. I tried sometimes to talk to her about 'the things that matter', and once I told her—quoting a saying of a friend of mine—that I did not want her to have a soul like a dried pea. Not long afterwards when I was bidding her good-night in her bed she said: 'Shake me, Mother, and see if I rattle.' It was not long before we lost her that she asked me one night if babies who had died would learn to walk and talk when they got to heaven. She seemed to feel

it would be sad for them to remain helpless. Afterwards it seemed strange that she should have been thinking about death. And yet with all this depth of feeling she could at ten and a half jump up and down clapping her hands in sheer glee over the prospect of some childish pleasure.

At the age of seven we thought she had had lessons by herself long enough, and should learn in company with other children. It would be a big plunge for her to be thrust from a lonely nursery into a crowd of girls such as she would find at the High School, whither we intended her to go ultimately. We therefore cast about to find a small private school where she could be initiated into the new life by easy stages. She was the youngest there, as it proved, the other children being two and three years older. Her first report said: 'Works carefully, and with remarkable application for one so young.' We were glad that this special quality in her work was at once recognized. Except for reading and writing such as she had done at home, the lessons were mostly far above her head. One day she came home full of a lesson on sonnets: 'We learnt how many lines there are in a sonnet, and how many syllables there are in a line.' 'And how many syllables are there in *motor-car*?' asked Mary's father. He had to answer the question himself, for it was outside Mary's range of knowledge. She was given concentrated essence of history to learn as 'home-work'. One day she brought back as her task the reigns of William and Mary, Anne, George I, and George II condensed into three small pages of a history book. Not long afterwards her father was telling her at breakfast-time of his doings in London the previous day. There was a royal visitor staying at Windsor, and Joseph Wright described how he saw a company of distinguished guests going by special train from Paddington to a grand dinner-party in Windsor Castle. The humble folk travelling to Oxford had to wait till the lords and ladies had departed. Mary was thrilled: 'And did you see Sir Thomas More, or the Duke of Wellington?' she asked eagerly. They said in her school report that her ideas of chronology were

vague. We did not think the reason far to seek, for besides the handbook on history, she was now and again given a list of ten or a dozen names, comprising a medley of poets, explorers, statesmen, inventors, &c. She was expected to write down briefly why each of these men was famous, and in what English king's reign he lived. It was no small labour for the nursery-governess to search out the necessary details, and reduce them to a compass within the powers of Mary, to whom writing was still an arduous task. Parallel to this was a list of hard words culled from a poem read to the Class. The pupil was to compose and write out at home some fresh sentence showing that she understood the meaning of the selected word. This also proved a helpful and healthy exercise for the nursery-governess; but when a list came headed by the words *Azure*, *Embrasure*, I went out on strike! I have the list before me now, it continues with *Gaunt*, *Impartial*, *Sombre*, and the next page treats of 'Metaphors', and 'Similes', with the date, October 11, 1904. Mary was just seven years and two months old! After my outburst, I think she was set to write in a copy-book all by herself during the 'highbrow' lesson, perhaps in an 'embrasure'. A scholastic friend of mine said this was 'putting on the piecrust when there was no pie', but happily Mary had inherited her father's thirst for thoroughness, and she was none the worse for her year at this now obsolete school. She had become accustomed to rubbing up against other children in a class, and that was what we wanted. In the autumn of 1905 we sent her to the High School. Henceforward school life was to Mary one continual source of interest and pleasure. Neither the work nor the discipline was ever irksome to her. Her reports contained the brief remark 'very good', or, more rarely, just 'good', written in various hands by her various teachers. The 'Absent', 'Late', and 'Bad Order Marks' sections were empty, and her place in the form, or in the term's examination was regularly 'Class I'. There was no doubt about her scholarly instincts. The idea of the 'poor, simple dressmaker' could be abandoned. At home she was always talking about the High School. Every-

thing connected with it was admirable and right. Mary was a shining example of the fallacy of the doctrine that discipline and obedience to authority hinder the development of independence and strength of character, and destroy the sense of freedom in the young. Mary was obedient as a matter of course, both at home and at school. It was an astonishment to her that a schoolfellow should *not* wear gloves on the way to and from school, when it was a definite rule that gloves should be worn. Mary herself despised gloves on any other occasion, but in this case there was no choice or question. Love for her parents and respect for her school removed so many things from the field of her own thought and decision, that actually her mind had larger freedom for finding new delight and interest in everything around her. A friend told me, in 1908: 'You know she was always called "Mary Wright", nobody ever spoke of her as "Professor Wright's little girl".' When she was about eight I allowed her to go to St. Giles' Fair with a schoolfellow under the charge of the latter's parents. Mary and her friend were busy over purchases at a stall, and when they had finished, the grown-ups had disappeared! Mary saw at once that it was useless to try and find them. She took her little friend by the hand, led her out of the crowd, and straight to the door of her home, she then came back by herself to me. I was angry with the caretakers, but proud of our Mary.

When she was nine years old we started Joseph Wright's plan of having a well-educated French or Swiss girl to live with us, and talk French to Mary out of school hours. Mary took to the new arrangement quite rationally. After the first walk with the Frenchwoman, who knew no English at all, Mary came to me saying: 'Would you like to know how they talk in Paris? Well, it's like this, they say "There's a lady!" "There's a house!" It's like that!' It must have been a little trying to an eager mind like Mary's, and I felt sorry for her one day when she told me: 'When I was out this afternoon I saw an old cart-horse munching chopped hay, and I wished I was eating nice

hay out of a nose-bag instead of having to talk French.' However, she made rapid progress, for she was naturally a linguist, and an irrepressible talker besides. By the end of the first year Mary began asking for explanations and rules when corrected for mistakes: 'How am I to know when to say *année* instead of *an*?' The lady from Paris could not answer such questions, for she had no grammatical understanding of her mother tongue. I had to ask her to seek another post, since Mary had quite outgrown what she had to offer. I remember we thought Mary would develop a taste for philology. The French lady had asked if the dog had given her his usual smile of greeting that morning, using the word '*sourire*'. Mary replied in the negative. I saw she had missed the point, and explained it in English. 'Oh, yes, he did *smile*', said Mary, 'but I thought *sourire* meant "to go mousing"! After the Frenchwoman left we had a girl from Berne, who was always complaining about the Oxford climate. Mary gave me a funny description of her own tactful behaviour towards this lady. They had been out together one afternoon, in wintry rain and mud, and in reply to my inquiries about the walk, Mary said: 'Mademoiselle kept on grumbling about the weather, and was very cross, and I had to get her nice again, You know, if I went to Berne, I shouldn't tell *her* I couldn't sleep a wink because the bears were howling all night!'

Mary had never been taught any German, but when she was with us in Germany her father was often surprised, not only by the way she picked up words, but by the intelligent questions she asked him about the language, as for instance: 'Dada, why do you say *ein* when you mean *one* thing, but *eins* when you are counting?' It was a point I had never noticed myself. What he thought still more remarkable was that she noted the difference between the North and South German pronunciation of a final *g*. 'Why does Mrs. — say "guten Tag"?' she asked. And on another occasion when she had been shopping with our German hostess she came back and told her father: 'The man in the shop said "*neunzisch*"!' She had her father's acute ear

for speech-sounds. Once when she and I were walking down St. Giles' we passed two ladies, and Mary said to me: 'I think those ladies were Germans.' One of them had made some trivial remark to the other in English with a foreign accentuation of the one word 'Oxford'. There was nothing specially foreign in their looks or dress. It was when we were in Germany in 1907 that Mary first realized that there might be some benefit in knowing a foreign language. We used to go for country expeditions with some friends who had a little girl about Mary's age. Mary could not talk German, nor could the other child speak English, but they found they could chatter all day to each other in French.

It was characteristic of Mary that while she was essentially downright and practical, yet she was a voracious reader of fairy-tales. I remember when she was seven, I was reading a bit out of *Grimm's Tales* to her as a dictation lesson, and to simplify her work I substituted 'came in' for the written 'entered'. Mary at once said: 'Why didn't you say "entered"? It's in the book.' Often when she was telling me a story I noticed she used expressions and even whole sentences that were not in her normal vocabulary, and must have been quotations from a familiar text. She gradually came to know all the Andrew Lang Fairy Books, besides various other such collections. When people gave her story-books about ordinary little girls and boys, she might read them from a sense of duty once, but she was not the least interested in them. Her own everyday experience of life with its lessons, play, and human companionship satisfied her rational mind; her imagination sought pasture in fairyland. I can never forget her last words—strange echoes of tales of magic—spoken when she had lost all earthly consciousness, and her love for us was passing into the realms of the unseen and mysterious: 'Put water thereon! Put water thereon, and you will see your daughter grow well and strong.'

We considered that she ought to learn to play the piano, so she had music lessons to which she applied herself as she did to everything else. Her music mistress said of her: 'I don't

know how it was that Mary got on so well with her music, because she was not musical. I suppose it was her great brain.' She had ambition—plenty of it. She heard me say to a friend who was inquiring about her progress: 'The difficulty is that Mary has no natural sense of *time* in music.' 'But I can learn it!' said Mary, and she did. She had the 'Yorkshire grit'. She was still very young when I heard her say stoutly: 'I'm not English, I'm *Yorkshire*!' Mary had, like her father, a zeal for hard work, and a solid power of perseverance. She was also his child in her complete lack of self-consciousness and shallow conceit. None of her schoolfellows at the High School begrudged her the 'red A' she earned almost every week, though she was the youngest in her Form. In the last week of her life the French mistress was ill and absent from school. She sent a message that Mary was to read aloud and translate the pages set from the reading-book for the next 'preparation'. The other children listened without jealousy, they were proud that a member of their Form should be thus learned and efficient.

For enlivening the study of manners and rules of behaviour, Mary and I adopted a plan of writing letters to the dog. One of Mary's is worth quoting for its mixture of serious thoughtfulness and childishness: 'Feb. 14, 1908. Dear Jack, If you forget to think you must say over to yourself a great many times all the things you have to remember, and *you must not think that the thinking will come of itself without you thinking about it*, because from *my* experience it will not. . . . It *would* do some good to tie knots in your tail as they would be heavy, and would make you think about it. Your loving Mary.' The Dictionary was so much a part of our home life that it even influenced Mary's play-time occupations. She had large packets of unused receipt forms which she filled in and sent to imaginary persons, sometimes with a letter. I have one still: 'June 15, 1906. My dear Mrs. Jones, I am sending you the English Dialect Dictionary today. Yours, Mrs. Wright.' Enclosed is a receipt for £15 from the said 'Mrs. Jones'. Mary was a big girl then. When she first began this game the price of the Dictionary ran into



at least six figures. Her father gave her the dummy copies of his Grammars, set up as specimens, and in these she kept accounts, made drawings, and pressed flowers. She realized her father's devotion to his work, and sometimes if she thought him unusually silent at table she would say: 'Are you thinking of nouns, Dada, or can I ask you something?' Once when she failed to find something I wanted, and I found it easily myself, I said: 'You're a poor looker, Mary!' 'But then, you see,' said Mary, 'I'm like Dada, I'm always thinking of books.'

In soul and mind Mary was a truly radiant creature, full of life and joy, everywhere diffusing happiness among those around her. We lavished on her the doubled love of parents already bereft of an only son; and then—as it was with him—she was gone within one day. They came forth as flowers, and were cut down.

In July 1908 there was a week when Mary was not very well. The weather was unusually hot, and we thought this had affected her. She still went to school every day. Returning from a bicycle ride to a music-lesson on Saturday morning, she complained of a headache, and I found she was feverish and put her to bed. Next morning she seemed herself again, but I kept her in bed. To make up for lost time, I allowed her as a special favour to do her home-work for school, Sunday though it was. This she did, and then about midday she suddenly became seriously ill. The doctor feared it was acute appendicitis, and asked for Sir William Osler's advice. Both doctors agreed that an operation was urgently necessary. I told Mary as gently as I could that the doctors thought her too ill for me to nurse, and that she was to be moved to a Nursing Home, but naturally tears came, and I—weakly obsessed by my own fears—exclaimed: 'Oh, Mary, don't cry, it makes Mother cry.' 'Then I *won't* cry', said Mary firmly, and from that moment she not only never shed a tear, but she kept up her normal cheerfulness, and that without any apparent effort. She had stifled self-pity and overcome fear. They said I must further tell her there was to be an operation, and when I told her she inquired in a

detached way as if it concerned somebody else: 'Will they cut pieces out of my inside?' Whatever might happen, she still believed that anything we said or did must be right. 'This is nice!' she said—partly to hearten my spirits—when the ambulance men were carrying her downstairs, and then again after we had started. And it was she who had the ready foresight to say before we left the house: 'I think I had better have a glass of water to drink in the carriage.' Everything was done to get a first-rate surgeon as quickly as possible. The best Oxford surgeon was away in Switzerland, Sunday trains were slow, and there were no motors available. In the evening Sir Alfred Pearce Gould arrived from London, but there was no operation. He told us delay had made no difference, it was already too late by the time we realized the danger. And now she was too ill even to feel any pain. We could only watch and wait. I learned afterwards that as she was being taken up in the lift, she had said to the doctor: 'How does this lift work? Does it go by water?' Her intelligent mind was still interested in everything she saw, eager for fresh knowledge, the while her physical life was fast ebbing away. That bright spirit was but freed from its earthly limitations, it could not be extinguished, though gone from our sight. When day was just breaking, that summer morning of July 6, 1908, Joseph Wright and I were filling our hands with white rambler roses, our hearts bowed under this new burden: 'Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.'

Joseph Wright was not the kind of man to talk about his griefs and shattered hopes; indeed, he never talked about himself, he rather sought to encourage others to dwell on their concerns, and discuss their future, not his. A very old friend says of him in a letter of March 1, 1930: 'I shall never forget his accompanying me to the gate after the loss of your little girl, when I came to see you on one of my infrequent visits to Oxford, and the wistful look with which he said: "You know, Giles, there are no children here now."' His sorrow was mine too, but even I did not fathom how deeply it entered even

into the little things of his daily life. I did not know till long afterwards that the reason why he gave up cycling was because Mary was not there. She had just learnt to ride, and had once been out with us. He had looked forward to future excursions all three together, and now he could not bear to ride again. Apart from natural parental feelings, I think he alone understood the disappointment of having neither son nor daughter to take up his life's work after him. Though they never got beyond childhood on this earth, yet, Boy with his quick observation, his intuition, his magnetic personality, and Mary with her marked talent for languages, her abounding energy, and her dogged perseverance, were both obviously endowed with his brains and force of character. He could not help looking on them as fit heirs of his intellectual labours, and seeing in them promise of further achievement. Even when Boy was gone, he thought of Mary, scholarly and business-like, becoming the future possessor of his own biggest piece of work, the English Dialect Dictionary.

## II. THE DOGS

Like his father before him, Joseph Wright 'could never live without a dog'. Indeed, the family one and all were real dog-lovers. By that I mean people who regard a dog as a man and a brother, and not a mere household adjunct, welcome or neglected according to mood and circumstance. Joseph Wright used often to say: 'If a man is a teetotaller, a non-smoker, and does not love dogs, he is a poor sort of creature.' He himself certainly gave his dog the right place in his heart and home. He would never have his dog taught to walk 'to heel', for he considered the practice a relic of medieval times, when the dog must walk behind his master, as a protection from a foe or robber, who might come upon him stealthily and stab him in the back. A dog in front is a useful herald. Joseph Wright frequently greeted a friend or acquaintance in the street with: 'By their dogs ye shall know them!' One of his first books was a French Grammar which he wrote in Germany in 1887. When

I was looking through it, I was amused to see how largely '*le chien*, the dog' figured, especially in the early exercises. In each of the first six 'Lessons' the pupil had to put into French a sentence such as: 'We have a good dog.' 'My father has a good dog.' 'My aunt has two cats and five dogs.' 'Where is my uncle's dog?' Knowing the devotion of all the Wrights to dogs, this sounded to me like family history.

When he was living in Germany he acquired a dachshund named Waldmeister, who was an extremely loyal comrade. I never heard much about him, except that he held it a punishable offence for any one to speak loudly to his master, and the latter's friends objected to being seized by the leg for no valid reason other than one hidden in the mind of a stalwart dog. Hence Waldmeister never came to Oxford.

In the Norham Road house, where he lived as a bachelor, his companion was Pollo, a large rough-haired fox-terrier. Pollo used to sally forth at dusk, cross the fields at the end of the road, swim the Cherwell, and fetch a nice fowl from a farm in Marston for his master's larder. He was the loyal guardian and watch-dog *par excellence*, and even included the redoubtable Sarah under his protection, although she did not love dogs or cats. Joseph Wright said of her: 'She had no human sympathy.' Pollo was out with her one day when a shopman in North Parade spoke rather loudly and roughly to her, whereupon Pollo bit the man, not because he went mad, but in obedience to his code of chivalry. The shopman and the police viewed the matter otherwise, and Joseph Wright was summoned. I found preserved among his papers the receipt for 'one guinea' paid to a solicitor for 'professional charges in reference to a summons . . . for keeping a dangerous dog,' together with the document itself—reminding one of a royal decree in the Book of Daniel—which says: 'WHEREAS a Complaint was this day made to the Justices of the Peace in and for the City of Oxford in Petty Sessions assembled, for that you are the owner of a dangerous Dog, which is not kept under proper control: AND WHEREAS it appears to us that such Dog is

a dangerous Dog, and not kept under proper control: NOW we the undersigned, being two Justices of the Peace of the City aforesaid, do hereby . . . order that you destroy the said Dog, or cause the same to be destroyed within two days from the date hereof.' The option of 'proper control' in Pollo's case was deleted, and no loophole left for mercy. Joseph Wright paid 'seventeen shillings and sixpence for costs' for the legal processes of the trial, 'at the Police Court, County Hall, in the said City, this 19th day of October 1894', and went back home, collected his dog, and took the next train to Windhill, where he bestowed the offender on his brother Dufton, well out of reach of the Oxford executioner. Dufton was then foreman in a stone-quarry, and it so happened that for some time past the quarrymen had been suffering from a mysterious removal of the tools of their trade. Pollo was introduced and appointed warden of the tool-shed, and the leakage at once ceased. In his leisure time, beside the Windhill home door-step, he allowed himself the simple pleasure of an occasional game with the young, and when he retired from active work, he spent a serene old age as the beloved companion and playfellow of all the children in Wellington Street.

Exactly how Joseph Wright became possessed of a cat I cannot now tell, but certain it is that Spalp—short for Spalpeen—was an important member of the household, together with Pollo, at No. 6 Norham Road. She was just an ordinary English tabby, but when I say ordinary, I do so in the firm belief that the short-haired English cat has more brain and less selfishness and conceit than her more exquisite rivals. Spalp was devoted to her master. She would go for walks with him in the evening, after dark, following him like a dog. When he was away from Oxford, she would sit on the garden wall listening for his return. She never liked Sarah, and only went to the kitchen for food. Once Joseph Wright went to Germany for six weeks, what time Spalp was about to be busy with her own domestic affairs. On his return he questioned Sarah as to Spalp, but the former said she had very rarely seen the cat,

and knew nothing about her. Joseph Wright went into the garden and called her. At once a joyful cat came bounding up to him from out of some thick bushes, and they greeted each other with mutual fervour. Presently, when Joseph Wright was ensconced in his study, Spalp appeared carrying a kitten in her mouth. She laid her offspring at her master's feet, and hurried away again, only to bring another kitten, and then another, and another. Joseph Wright was so touched by this mark of confidence that he procured an orange-case from the nearest grocer to accommodate the mother and her whole family. He used to tell me that he had 'provided all North Oxford with kittens', and that 'if Spalp were to be followed to the grave by all her progeny, she would have a very considerable funeral procession'. One pair of kittens he named Ablaut and Umlaut. Let us hope they bore their names worthily when they exchanged the study of a great philologist for a North Oxford drawing-room.

When Joseph Wright moved into Langdale House, shortly before our marriage, Spalp again showed her dog-like nature. She was not attached to a house, as cats are supposed to be, but to her particular owner, so when he called her over the garden wall from the old house on one side of it to the new house on the other, she came to him and made her abode with him. Spalp openly resented me when I appeared on the scene. She regarded me as a suspicious intruder, but after careful observation she accepted me in due course, since I behaved pleasantly to her master, and he did not seem to mind my having come to stay permanently with the two of them. Once she was badly poisoned and I found her lying, more dead than alive, in a lean-to shed at the side of the house. I brought her indoors and laid her on the study hearth-rug on a rubber hot-bottle. I covered her in flannel, with her back supported by a second hot-bottle, and kept her thus day and night. The second night when I went in to see if she was still alive, a tall and emaciated tabby rose up and tried to come forward to thank me, with hollow purrings. She tottered and fell, but spirit and life were trick-

ling back into her veins, and from that hour she began to amend. Henceforth her master and I were as one in her faithful eyes. The children were rather a trial to her, but she was growing old by the time they were running about, and were big enough to want to play with her. They would not hurt her, nor would she scratch them, but she kept out of the nursery, and when they invaded the study she preferred to retire to the kitchen. A framed portrait of Spalp has its place on our walls beside those of the two children.

After parting with Pollo, Joseph Wright managed to exist without a dog till we were married, and living in Langdale House, when somebody gave us a fox-terrier as a wedding-present. He was a gay and attractive little dog, but he had none of the virtues of the soldierly Pollo, and would fawn upon any amiable tramp in the street. He was, in fact, anybody's dog, and so little ours, that in the end we passed him on to the job-gardener who presumably loved him for his cheap urbanity.

It was when we were in Aberdeen in April 1902 that I first noticed that prince among dogs, the Scottish terrier, and then and there I vowed that our next dog should be a real Aberdeen. We have had three—the third being yet alive—as different in character as ever three dogs could be. First, Jack, the impulsive one, the hero, the human being; then MacGregor, 'the philosopher' as his master termed him; and now Grendel, at six years old still the amiable child, yet true to his blood, a child with a purpose in life. Just one month after that trip to Scotland we were in treaty with James Blair of Woodside, Aberdeen, for the purchase of our first friend amongst this aristocratic race. Our Willie Boy was gone, and Mary was alone in her nursery, what better companion could she have than a puppy? We were told that James Blair was the right breeder to approach, and we liked his queer letters about pedigree and price, ears and food, bestrewn with capitals, and devoid of punctuation: 'Dear Sir Give him the Soaked and give him house craps his name is Jack he was used to childern and is an aful kind little Chap and will mak a Splendid Companion.' So the

'puppie' arrived one morning, having travelled by a night express in his sugar-box. On the label was written: 'Live Puppie. With Care. If delayed will Die,' and further: 'His Name is Jack.' No one with any sort of a heart can do other than lose it to a puppy, most of all to an Aberdeen. The long body, the short inadequate legs, the big wise-looking head, the honest eyes, and on top of everything an odd pair of wobbly ears, form such an attractive medley that all one's feelings are appealed to in one fell swoop. Mr. Blair had written: 'You will no doubt be aware that Scottish Terreirs ears rise and fall untill about 7 Months old.' One of Jack's ears rose up straight, and the other he wore slantwise, with a droop at the point, which added a comic touch to his otherwise solemn face, like the billycock<sup>1</sup> hat set awry on the comedian's head. He had yet nearly two months for his ears to 'rise and fall' in this ungoverned manner. The study was on the first floor, and the staircase was a serious problem, his hind legs were so far away from the front ones that going up they acted as a drag, and coming down they skidded round and got in the way of the steering. From the first he craved for our human society. We tried putting him to bed in the pantry downstairs, duly considering warmth and doggy comfort. Jack wept and wailed with a heart-rending cry, till we fetched him up into the study. Here where we had been sitting all day he felt less forsaken and banished, and he slept alone without a murmur. When he had gained full control of his legs, and could jump on to a chair, the temptation to sample the rich and rare food now within his reach was too strong for his youthful morals. Perhaps it was not really a question of morals. In the only home he had as yet known all the food he ever saw was put there on purpose to be eaten by little dogs. Here was a table spread with food, therefore it must be eaten, and one solitary puppy would do his best. So he consumed a plateful of chocolate cakes, and found them worth a subsequent scolding. Next day a shoulder of

<sup>1</sup> My young friends tell me that what I learnt from my brothers to call a 'billycock' is now never so styled, the term being replaced by 'bowler'.



lamb was left all by itself on the same table. This could not be dealt with on the premises like cakes, so the now valiant Jack eloped with the lamb into the garden. So far, all was well, and he saw no reason for the unfriendly attitude of his master and mistress when the subject was mentioned. Then late one fateful evening the scent of a large and succulent piece of cheese drew him once more to the dining-room table where people left unwanted good things. Nobody missed it, and nothing was said about it in conversation, but in the night such aches and pains beset a sad puppy that he was forced to howl with misery. He soon forgot the sadness, but wisdom remained, and he never stole again. Indeed, in later years he developed a very stern sense of mine and thine, which it behoved him to enforce on others. His master and mistress might do what they liked with their own property in the way of allowing other people to handle, or even remove it, but in their absence nothing belonging to them must be touched by a strange hand. The first time we became aware of this rigid rule was once when a Cambridge Professor came to lunch with us. After lunch, Joseph Wright and his guest returned to the study, with Jack in attendance as usual. Presently Joseph Wright left the room to fetch a book from the overflow library upstairs. Hearing a vigorous barking he quickly returned, and found the Cambridge Professor standing on a chair, facing a furious dog. He had in all innocence taken hold of a book on a shelf. Ever afterwards we warned our guests that if left in a room alone with the dog, they must not so much as pick up a newspaper. He was so devoted to us that if we were both out, and he was left by himself, he would sit at an upper window over the front door watching for us. If Joseph Wright and I had had separate outside engagements, we could each know by the face at the window that the other had not yet returned. His successor, MacGregor, when we were both out, would fetch a pair of boots or slippers and sit mournfully beside them till we came back again.

Deep and lasting as was Jack's friendship for us, the real love of his life was for our Mary. It was on Mary that he

bestowed every morning his rare smile; it was through her and for her that he learnt his complicated games; it was for her sake that to his dying day he continued to love all children, and would run races on the lawn to amuse them with no thought for his own old and tired body. When Mary left us, he was a young dog still, but his head went grey with sorrow, and he never smiled again. He missed her sorely. What mattered it if she did disturb his slumbers violently by flinging her arms round his neck, with her eager, 'D'you love me Jack, d'you love me?' Of course he did, and of course he gave her the responsive lick, and the wrinkle on his lips said plainly: 'I wouldn't tolerate these rude awakenings from anybody else but you, Child!' He seemed to understand from the very beginning that his role in life was that of a playfellow for Mary. He had what were known as his 'dramatic performances,' and for these he much preferred an audience of children. Mary would place a bit of cake on the floor about a yard away, and then Jack would sit up and beg whilst she recited: 'There once was a little dog, who lived in a *Wood*'—pause, for a low growl—'He never was *Good*'—more growling—'But he always'—louder growls—'did *Bark* and *Growl*', here, with a sudden and realistic outburst of ferocity, our benevolent play-actor would pounce upon his piece of cake, and look round for applause, quite ready to accede to cries of: 'Do it again! Do it again!' Another very popular piece was that of the Dog who was Ill. This was played in the largest arm-chair in the study. A poor sick dog lay there, with his head thrown back limply on a cushion: 'We think you are *very* ill'—feeble groan from the patient—'May we feel your pulse?'—here, one paw was weakly extended—'Could we see your tongue? Thank you, we think you must have the doctor'—interval, for more groans—'But now, perhaps you are a little *Better*!' With this magic word the patient leapt into the auditorium barking his loudest, till urged to return to the stage, and go through the whole performance again. For the garden, there was the arduous sport known as 'Mouse in Here!' Jack had to tear in breathless haste from one

bush to another, and appear convinced that each child in turn had discovered the haunt of a veritable mouse; or, on the lawn, there was the ring-game of ball. The child who caught the ball aloft had it to throw again, but once dropped, the ball had to be retrieved from the jaws of an elusive dog. Whilst writing my memories of Jack, some friends who knew him long ago said to me: 'Haven't you put in about him ringing his bell? We always remember him by that, and we often tell each other the tale.' In our upstairs study at Langdale House there was a tall nest of drawers, with hanging brass handles. I used to keep puppy biscuits in the bottom drawer, and when Jack felt an inward urge towards biscuit, he would insert his nose under the handle, and cause it to chink. It was a device of his own devising, and he found it a great success, for however busy we might be, such talent demanded instant recognition and reward. When we left Langdale House, this particular piece of furniture was transferred to the dining-room, and I no longer kept biscuits in the bottom drawer. Jack knew this perfectly well; he now never expected anything out of the drawer, but he had learnt that the chinking of the handle drew attention to his wants. This was a valuable piece of knowledge which must not be lost. If nobody at the tea-table thought of giving cake to a silent and well-behaved dog, he would 'ring his bell' politely, and of course win his meed of cake. Once when we were both at work in the study, the doors being open, we heard Jack in the dining-room 'ringing his bell'. He was bored, and thought it time we should shut our dull books and show some interest in him and his concerns.

When he was still quite a puppy, we noted as a sign of his unusual intelligence how quickly he had observed our English habit of starting tea with bread and butter. He lay quietly under the table till he heard somebody mention the word *cake*. He then appeared, and would sit up and beg at a corner of the table where he could command a view of two sides at once, and double the chance of choice morsels. An Aberdeen can beg comfortably for a longer time than most dogs, since he is

endowed with a tail exactly suited for use as a buttress. On one occasion Joseph Wright was talking to a friend about old student days in Germany as they were smoking in the study, and the former began telling stories of the famous Kuno Fischer, whereupon Jack sat up and begged. He was interested in the subject of fish. Joseph Wright often used to tell his pupils: 'When I talk Gothic to my dog, he puts his tongue out.' There is a certain high-sounding word in Gothic which means a fig-tree, viz. *smakka-bagms*. After a course of private tuition from his master, Jack would lick his lips on hearing this word. The two of them never tired of this linguistic masterpiece. Joseph Wright was accustomed to take his dog to Gothic Classes at the Taylor Institution, where the latter would lie perfectly still under the table, till the hour came to an end. 'Would you like to come to the Gothic Class?' was always a gladdening invitation to a clever heather-brindled Scottie, quoted sometimes to human students apt to show less enthusiasm for the subject. Perhaps it was the result of living with a distinguished philologist, or that plus the possession of distinguished brains, which caused Jack to be so quick at learning languages. Mary and her French governess had long ago taught him to seek the mouse in French. Mary told one of our friends: 'When Dada and Mother don't want Jack to understand, they have to talk German.' But even German would not last for ever as a secret tongue. Jack barked each time '*Letters*' were mentioned, for joy of going out to post them; hence, to preserve a desired silence, Joseph Wright would ask me if my '*Briefe*' were ready. In less than a week Jack would bark at the word *Briefe*. As for his name—'J', or 'Dear J' was no concealment, and it was not long before he recognized himself under the mask of 'Our esteemed friend'. All dogs have a keen sense of hearing, but I think Jack could have been a phonetician, he was so acutely sensitive to tone. No errand-boy could ever delude him by imitating the voice of a cat, nor vex him by mock yelpings. Jack scorned to turn a hair. Only once was he deceived, and that was when Donald

Tovey caterwauled to a nocturne by Chopin. It was a high compliment to both pianist and composer.

In those days motors were just beginning to appear. It was a new tale of sound and fury to be heard in the street, and it excited a curious frenzy in the mind of Jack. He was impelled by some answering force to rush madly at this strange and terrible monster. We tried to check him with chastisement—rather than death by misadventure—but it made no impression. We tried holding him by a leather leash, but he broke it like tow in our hands. One day when out with Mary and her governess, he gave them the slip, and was run over and badly bruised. After some days of painful inaction, he recovered sufficiently to walk out again. 'At least', we said, 'this will have taught him how dangerous motors can be for dogs.' However, when the first motor loomed in sight, Jack dashed forward to meet it, apparently to wreak vengeance on it for his late sufferings. He rolled over unhurt on the kerb, his injured limb proving too weak for such frantic exertion. We knew then that no form of discipline would control his passion, and all we could do was to buy a steel chain. Often Jack was the first to detect the sound of the approaching car, and he would run to us with drooping ears and tail, and with imploring eyes beseech us to tie him up and protect him from his 'worsen' self. At last there came a day, or rather, a dark night, when Jack and his master were going out to post 'Briefe', all unknowing that the drive gate had been left open. Jack heard a motor coming and ran; the gate would be his safeguard. He was brought back in his master's arms, half-conscious. Some part of the car had caught him by the throat and inflicted a grievous wound. His good doctor came daily with dressings and bandages, marvelling each time at Jack's stoic endurance. There was no need to muzzle him, like a common dog—Jack bore his pain like a martyr at the stake. Then a curious rash appeared which puzzled the doctor. That evening Jack crept away to hide in dark corners of the garden, and I found him only by the gleam of the white bandage round his neck. In life he never left us—

death he must meet alone. Next morning Mr. Verney, the doctor, came saying: 'I knew you would want me early. I could not sleep for thinking about him. I got up and went through some books. It is erysipelas, and there is no chance of saving him. In all my thirty years of experience of wounds and diseases in dogs, I never knew erysipelas set up before. It is as if he were an old man, and now his heart is giving out. I don't think he will suffer. I can do nothing for him, and he will be happier here just with you.' It was a fine warm day, and our poor old friend yearned to be in the open air, so he lay on a broad clump of candytuft. One or both of us sat on the ground beside him for eight long hours. When he could no longer see us, he would still show by the cock of his ears that he heard us, and knew we were there. When darkness fell our vigil was over. Together with the maids and the gardener we formed a torchlight procession down the rose-alley, and buried Mary's playfellow in her own plot of garden, under the seedling fir-tree she had brought home from the Black Forest. One could fancy them romping together in the Elysian fields. Surely if selfless love, faithfulness, and heroism in pain are immortal qualities in man, they must be so in dogs? I, for one, believe that if I never meet my Aberdeens again, it will be due to my own shortcomings, and not theirs.

That was in 1913, and we had had Jack for eleven years. The vacant place was intolerable for more than a few months. We sent again to James Blair of Aberdeen, and one morning there arrived in a box our Wee MacGregor. His head was bigger, and his legs thicker and more bent than Jack's, and when full-grown he was altogether a heavier dog. High-strung were his nerves, in early youth, and he readily became panic-stricken in the street. A horse standing alongside the pavement, a bicycle leaning up against a wall, an errand-boy's basket outside a gate, would inspire him with such terror that, tail between legs, he would run like a streak of black lightning away, no matter whither. But he outgrew this nervousness, and by the time he was a year old he was as fearless a dog as you could wish to see,

except on one point—he always recoiled from raw meat. He had a perfect horror of a butcher's shop, and would rush past it, or cross the road to avoid it. He knew the step of the butcher-boy in the backyard, and would bark his repugnance from afar. He would not eat his dinner if his plate were set where this baneful boy had trod. Like the princess and the pea, it was the exalted refinement of his birth. Never was there a dog so superbly conscious of the dignity of his race. It was not snobbishness, it was a sense of the divine right of kings, an inherited right, coupled with the calm reserve of the Scot. If MacGregor wished to cross the road, the traffic must hold itself up, he never hurried. Happily motors were then still somewhat rare, else our life in the street would have been one constant anxiety. I fancied him on his death-bed finding satisfaction in the thought that never in his whole life had he hastened his steps one fraction beyond his chosen pace for anybody's car. There had indeed been two or three golden occasions when somebody's motor had had to stop, whilst the MacGregor walked past it. He took no notice of anybody outside the house. The world—it would seem—is divided into the people who love Aberdeens and the people who are frightened of them. MacGregor impressed both types. He was so handsome that adorers would stop in front of him and go into raptures, whilst the timid would pass hurriedly by, gathering up their doglets, if such they had. I once said to an agitated spinster: 'He won't eat your dog, Madam.' 'Oh, but they *do*!' she wailed. MacGregor pursued the even tenor of his way regardless of compliment or otherwise. Persons at the sea-side, sitting idle on the Promenade, would attempt by nods and becks and wreathed smiles to engage the attention of so lordly a passer-by. MacGregor, with dignified aloofness, neither saw nor heard them; they were no more to him than the benches on which they sat. He would not brook any familiarity. That was why he disliked his doctor, Mr. Verney. The latter had a big and bluff presence, and within, the kindest of hearts. He really loved his dog-patients. A friend of mine once said

of him: 'I think he had only to look in the glass, and he knew what he had to be.' But his hearty greeting, 'Hullo, old chap, and what's the matter with you?' was too familiar for the courtly MacGregor; it was an unpardonable insult. When sent for to see MacGregor in what proved his last illness, Mr. Verney's reiterated 'He does not even mind me' was what most made our hopes sink within us. To see MacGregor enjoying the full flower of his dignity was to see him travelling by train, first-class. He waited for the porter to open the door and put in the hand-bags, and then he stepped in like a celebrity on tour. We always said he would have tipped the porter, if that were possible for dogs. There came a time when the ruling race of lapdogs had been biting ticket-collectors, thereby causing an edict to go forth condemning able-bodied canine gentlemen to wear a muzzle and ride in the guard's van. Insult heaped on injury! MacGregor resigned himself to the muzzle, but to be separated from the master and mistress under his care was not to be borne. 'Your dog must go into the guard's van', said the porter. MacGregor put his foot down, four of them, heavily, and neither he nor I budged one inch. Another porter came, saying the same words. MacGregor contemplated the carriage door and pondered: 'Would cats, or mice, or rabbits be most in season at Sidmouth? Would the ex-landlady still bring votive offerings of bones, and leave them in a parcel on the doorstep? Was this present ignominy necessary in order to reach these joys?' By this time five pairs of legs in superior uniform stood round an imperturbable dog too lofty-minded to see any charms in trousers. All the same, not one man among the throng dared lift a finger to remove the MacGregor by force, so after an exchange of secret glances, one of the number assumed an air of condescension and said: 'Well, if nobody in the compartment objects, you *may* take your dog in with you.' Even a Railway Company had to bow before MacGregor. Once a high official on the platform at Leeds wanted to purchase him, but were he ready to sell all that he had, our pearl of great price was not to be bought.



MacGregor began very early to show unusual reasoning power. It was one of his special pastimes to chase cats out of the garden. He very soon learnt that thrushes and blackbirds give voice to a note of terror when they see a cat. This became like the sound of a bugle to a war-horse. At once somebody must rush to open all the doors, MacGregor must be up and away without a moment's loss of time. My old aunt, Mrs. Henry Clark, who lived quite near us till her death in 1927, was an ardent admirer of MacGregor, and he had a great respect for her. On one occasion when MacGregor and I were paying her a call, in getting up from her chair, she slipped and fell forward on the hearth-rug. MacGregor was on the spot at once, silently and deftly administering the first aid rendered by dogs since the time of Lazarus—and doubtless before then. For any one well on in the eighties a fall is serious. I wondered if the old lady had lost consciousness, but before I had time to grow alarmed, she raised herself on her arms and observed with emphasis: 'He always *was* the perfect gentleman.' She wrote once in a letter to me: 'I do not think you appreciate the singular beauty of MacGregor's character.' She was mistaken about our lack of appreciation, but I often repeated the rest of the phrase to the gentleman himself, and he recognized its aptness. He loved tiny children, babies in particular, and would sit up and beg beside a perambulator to be allowed to look at the baby inside. We never taught any of our dogs common parlour tricks, we had too much respect for them. It would have been an insult to intellect to ask the MacGregor to balance a lump of sugar on his nose, or to die for his country. He was accustomed to sit on a chair in the dining-room at tea-time, with his front paws laid elegantly on the table, one on each side of a plate, and during the War his master taught him to 'salute' before getting his portion of cake. It was a great feature at Sunday teas to have MacGregor as a member of the party at table. He did his saluting with great solemnity, though he could not get his paw within some inches of his head, by reason of the curve of his forelegs and the stiffness of his

muscles. The older type of Aberdeen was made by Nature for digging out rats from the earth, and MacGregor never lost an opportunity for pursuing his natural calling. The actual presence of a rat was not at all necessary. With his philosophic mind he had only to say to himself 'rat', and straightway the idea created was of sufficient driving force for him to see in the most unlikely spot the home of the desired rodent. If we had continued to visit the Malvern Hills—as we did two or three times—I expect somebody would have written to *The Times* to complain of MacGregor's quarrying there. He never went off by himself to dig, it was his pet occupation when we sat down to rest on our holiday walks, and then out of loyalty to us he selected a site at our very feet. It was like consorting with a volcano in eruption to be near the MacGregor in full swing, but we never argued with him, because he always had reason and right on his side in anything he did. As a man about town he was extremely faddy about getting wet, carefully walking round puddles, and picking his way across a muddy street. I frequently taunted him with the offer of two pairs of goloshes and an umbrella. He had learnt that rain dripping through trees falls more heavily on the coat than rain from the open sky, hence where trees overhung the pavement he would walk on the kerb, or in the roadway, if need be. But once away on a country holiday, no all-weather sheep-dog was more heedless of rain and water. To prance through wet fields with the special leaping action of the Aberdeen in long grass; to scale the moors in a dripping mist; this was his joy and delight. He would even run up the course of a hill-side beck, lapping water as he went, like an engine on an express train. Cresting the horizon might be a patch of turf, the garden city of a colony of rabbits. The population would be at their doors, bolt upright on their haunches, having heard the distant enemy. Suddenly MacGregor would espy them—scores of prick-eared bunnies—he pounded up the hill and arrived breathless. Where *are* those rabbits, were they but phantom shapes? He was puzzled, but ready to pursue again. He loved those days we spent on the

moors, as we did too. Like his master, he had an extraordinary talent for geography; he would run on ahead and take the right path, remembering it from the previous year. We have seen him pick out the stile in a long stretch of wall. Any one who knows those Yorkshire 'dry walls', where stones may project here and there all along, will realize that it takes an observant eye to note where two or three project rather more than the others, and range above each other slantwise to form a stile, and that so little used that no apparent path leads up to it. That was MacGregor in the country, he was much less energetic in the town. He used to come with his master to meet me on my way back from church on Sunday mornings. They generally picked me up at the corner of Norham Gardens. MacGregor preferred to walk only half this distance, and then sit down and wait. He knew we should come back the same way, and he could then rejoin us. He made a point of greeting us as if we were prodigal sons, and he the forgiving parent. The short-legged heavy type of Aberdeen does not live very long, the weight becomes a strain on the heart. As years went on, MacGregor's movements became slower, and even yet more dignified, and in time he became so short of breath when he walked out with us that we were obliged to leave him at home. He was nearing his end, but like Isaac of old, he still loved savoury meat, and one fateful day he dug up a highly seasoned bone from some secret burying-place, and the result was a severe attack of gastritis. Mr. Verney and I soon saw that our efforts were unavailing. All one day, and on through the night, I was gently but firmly fighting MacGregor's hereditary desire to hide himself in the garden to die, and by the morning his strength of will was withdrawn. He had given us all his love, all his loyalty, now he laid his pride and independence at our feet—he would remain with us to his last breath. He lay motionless on the study floor, only showing by the movement of his ears that he liked to have me sitting beside him. Thinking he was too far gone to understand, I said to Joseph Wright: 'We can leave him here whilst we go to dinner, he won't

notice.' He did understand, and he tried to get up and follow us, as he had always done. I carried him in my arms. We both sat beside our old friend till midnight. Joseph Wright said he never wanted to see another dog die. It is a comfort to know he was spared that pain. In the morning I read the funeral psalm at prayer-time, whilst in Mary's garden, beside the grave of Jack, the old gardener, Mr. Phipps, was digging one for MacGregor. We always spoke of him as 'Father Phipps', he was so homely and countrified. He never cared for dogs, he was, indeed, rather nervous when, in the exuberance of juvenile vigour, the MacGregor would come rushing down the garden with boisterous barks. 'All right, all right!' Father Phipps would say, hoping to pacify the foeman in his charge. It therefore touched us the more deeply that, for MacGregor dead, he expended all his art as a professional grave-digger to provide dignified burial. Duly measured, cut east and west, with the sides smooth and shaped like a coffin, was the grave where he and I solemnly laid the body of MacGregor. In grateful memory of his and Jack's kind doctor, who himself passed away shortly afterwards, I will add here the letter he wrote to me about MacGregor:

20 Oct. 1924. I received the telephone message this morning and I was not surprised, although I was sorry to hear it. I know just how you and the Professor feel at the loss of your old friend, as I have been through the same experience myself more than once, and it has always been a great satisfaction to me to have been with my dumb friends, and able to render them every little kindness I could. . . . Please accept my sincere sympathy.

We called his successor Grendel, and thereby hangs a tale, which has constantly to be told, for nobody understands without it the why and the wherefore of the strange name. Besides, we often shorten it to Gren, and some people insist on supposing his full name to be Gwendolen, till I have to call him Grrrrrr . . . for short. He belonged to Moreton-in-Marsh, in Gloucestershire. Now in the ancient English epic poem Beowulf, there is

a monster called Grendel who haunts the moors and marshes, and sallies out at night to devour sleeping warriors in their Hall. When the monster was destroyed by the hero, we are told that his mother yet lived to follow in his footsteps. Here was a puppy born at *Moreton-in-Marsh*, with a mother left behind in the old home. He certainly was not a bloodthirsty and ferocious monster, but exactly the very opposite of such, for truly no more peace-loving little dog ever existed. His previous owners contended that Moreton is not in a *marsh*, and that the word is a corruption of *march*, a boundary. That made no serious difference, as the fabled monster was also said to be a *march-stalker*. The dog, they told us, was of pure breed, but having a white streak on his chest, he was disqualified for a career of prize-winning at shows. I had heard of him at the outset by answering an advertisement, and then he was brought to Oxford for my inspection, dumped into my arms on the platform of the railway station. Grendel was then six months old, but still a perfect babe, an orphan child with a pleading and rather unhappy face. He clung to me as to a long-lost mother. I took him theoretically 'on approbation', but I knew it was for good and all. When Joseph Wright saw him he assumed at once that he was to be our new dog. We had both to go to a lecture that afternoon, and the poor orphan howled all the time we were away. On our return the storm and tempest of his rejoicings made him seasick. He had already cast in his lot with ours, there was only a cheque and an old leash and collar to return to Moreton-in-Marsh. That night Grendel had to sleep in our bedroom, one could not leave a foundling on a mat in the passage. Joseph Wright said he did not mind having him 'for a bit at first, but when he is older, he must sleep outside like the others'. Somehow Grendel never did grow any older, so, like the poor, he was always with us. He had then hardly got over distemper, and his more robust brothers and sisters had stepped into the dinner-plates before him, and robbed him of his due portion therein. Ere long he became quite strong and healthy, without, however, losing the

childlike air. He is far more loquacious than 'the uncles', and has none of their stand<sup>f</sup>-offishness. Grendel is everybody's dog, as far as interchange of greeting and friendly intercourse can go, yet he is true to the old stock in that at heart he was from the first devoted to us, and to us only. Colonel Richardson, I have been told, lays it down as a maxim for dog-owners, that one should always see to it that one's dog has a purpose in life. This is a thoroughly sound rule. I have known dogs left to lead such a purposeless existence that they take to a kind of highwayman's life, out of sheer boredom, and it ends in death on the road. Our dogs have always taken upon themselves the duty of looking after us and our worldly goods. Jack was paternal, because for the first part of his life he had Mary, and when she was gone he was more than ever benevolent towards us. I never forget the day when he and I had been playing with some children in our empty nursery, and they had gone away, and I sat down alone in my room, feeling for the moment broken in spirit. I did not know that Jack had followed me, till a cold nose was pushed into my listless hand with the silent message: 'I know I am nothing but a humble old dog, but you still have me.' I pulled myself together that instant, and wondered if any human friend could have conveyed in one small act such well-timed and well-tuned sympathy. I often told Jack that I was sorry he had been put into just a little doggy body. MacGregor was the ideal Solomon of the fireside, always reliable, always there, no home complete without such a treasury of wisdom. Lastly there was Grendel, childlike in some ways, but as much obsessed by the idea that he had charge of us as were his more sober predecessors. When travelling with us by train, he was quite happy so long as we remained together under his eye. He could sleep on the platform of a bustling station if he had us both on the chain (so to speak), but should one of us stray in pursuit of tickets or luggage, restless anxiety filled his heart. He loves motoring, and where we should be enjoying the expanse of a Yorkshire moor, or the pleasant green of a roadside copse, Grendel, nose in air,

would be turning his head this way and that, noting a delicious smell of rabbits. He is very timid in the street when he sees another dog approaching, partly by nature, and partly because Joseph Wright, realizing his babyishness, used always to say: 'Tie him up, tie him up, there's a dog coming!' Hence the young Grendel never had a chance to brave the world on his own four feet. Only twice have I seen Grendel show temper. He adores puppies, and one day when he was playing with a very young compatriot, a boisterous Irish friend came barging in between, almost upsetting the puppy. Grendel turned round in a rage: 'You *dare* hurt my baby brother! I'll kill you first!' The second occasion was when he first beheld an English bulldog. It was verily an ultra-beautiful specimen of the race, if bulldog beauty consists in distorted features and massive bulk. Grendel snorted with sudden and wild fury: 'Though I perish in the attempt, this monstrous gargoyle of a dog must be wiped off the face of the earth.' We hauled him away by main force before the gargoyle had grasped the situation, else Grendel would probably have been wiped off the earth.

Gradually, during the last year or two, it was borne in upon the mind of Grendel that his master was growing old and less vigorous than of yore, and it therefore behoved his guardian dog to become more sternly vigilant. A strange man must not be allowed to touch the very spectacles on his master's face; might he not be about to cut his throat? Moreover, we must now be considered less able to be responsible for the safety of our belongings. Even when we were in the room, the man who came and tampered with the wireless must be covered by a watch-dog's eye. When once it happened that the wireless man escaped by himself to work his wicked will unobserved, Grendel resorted to real violence. He had come off duty, supposing the man to have finished the job, though in fact he was only gone to fetch a ladder to get at the wire over the top of the window from outside. Grendel had gone to sit with his master on the other side of the house, when, hearing suspicious sounds, he went round the corner, and beheld a man apparently

getting into the study by the window. Grendel's reasonings followed a scriptural track: he entereth not by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber, as such, he must be taken by the leg. Happily no injury was done, as Grendel's violence was mostly bluff. The watch-dog element was not always uppermost, for Grendel's chief concern was the more intimate office of the faithful attendant. His master must not breakfast in bed, nor dress, nor even take a bath by himself. And when there came a time that he never got up to dress and go down into his study, a loyal-hearted dog lay silently under the bed. For weeks after the beloved master had vanished, every morning at the same hour would Grendel go and sit on the staircase looking for me to come. 'Why don't we take up his breakfast, as you and I always did? Perhaps he may have come back and be waiting for us to bring it. Surely you have not forgotten him?' I was sorry I could not explain that I never should forget. Dogs are so humble, and so patient. Grendel does not understand, but he accepts, and goes on doing what he conceives to be his duty, putting into practice the proverbial saying: 'Tis love that makes the world go round.' Two honours have fallen to the lot of young Grendel such as his less fortunate predecessors never had. In 1926 Mr. Ernest Moore, the artist who painted the portrait of Joseph Wright, also painted one of Grendel, which he gave to us as a parting gift. Grendel is also enshrined in the philological archives of Germany, in the pages of *Englische Studien*. He appears in the picture of us in the Festschrift which the German philologists compiled in honour of Joseph Wright's seventieth birthday.

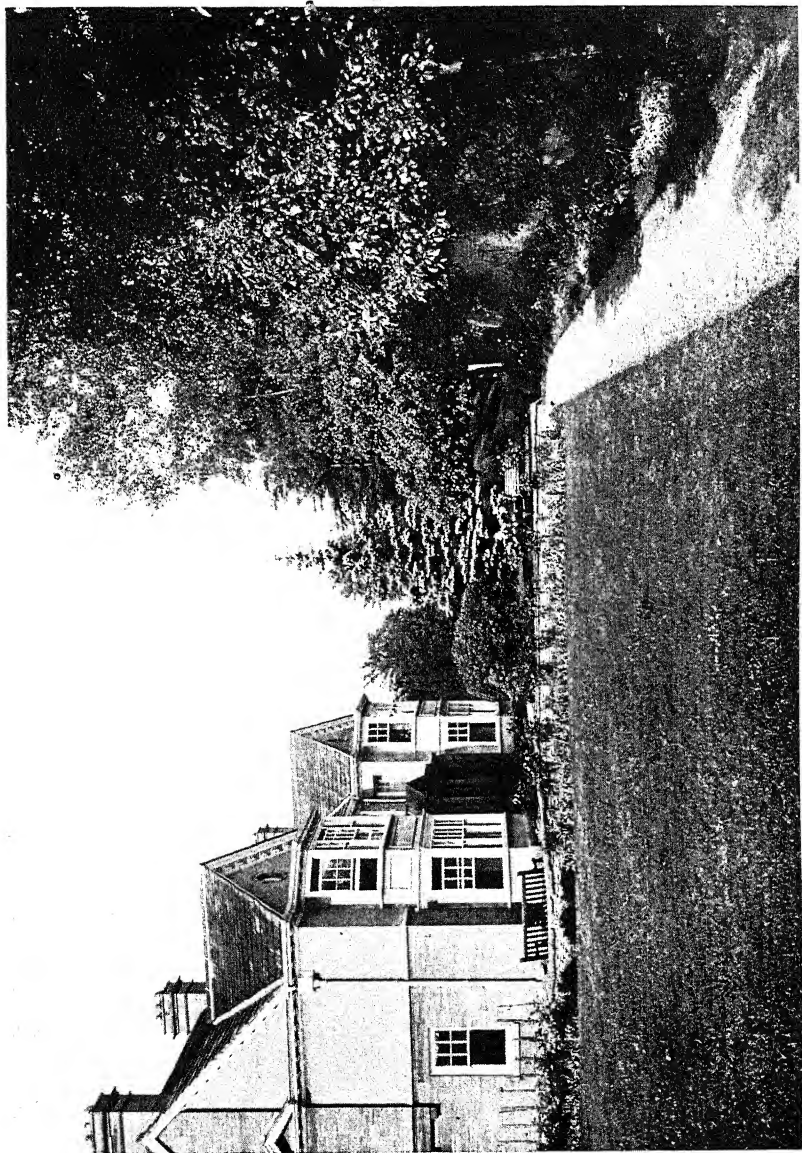
### III. THACKLEY

Joseph Wright says of himself in one of his 'business' letters to me before we were married: 'It is a weakness with me to look into the far off future in all things.' He had followed this rule when he bought furniture in 1891 for No. 6 Norham Road, to fit the bigger house he would need when he became a married



man. So now, almost two years before the Dialect Dictionary was finished, he gave his mind to considering the practical and domestic question of room where to bestow his 'tools' when they must be removed from the 'Workshop'. His study at Langdale House—which had been our home since our marriage in 1896—was already full of books, and could not be made to take more. After much deliberation we dismissed the idea of buying and enlarging Langdale House, and looked at several others, but everywhere we found that in the then existing North Oxford house the study was a tiny room, 'not big enough to swing a cat round in'—to use one of Joseph Wright's phrases—because the married don possessed a room in College, where he kept his books and took his pupils. In the end we decided to build. We were fortunate enough to secure the one remaining plot of freehold land in Banbury Road, the last acre left of an estate originally bought by Miss Beale—of Cheltenham College fame—for St. Hilda's College in Oxford. She discovered, after purchasing, that the site was too far away, so she sold the land again, and it was split up into separate sections. A Professor was obliged to live within a mile and a half of Carfax—'the University radius' of that date—and the new site was just within that limit. Although the Banbury Road was not so *infra dig.* as Park Town, it was still hardly 'Oxford'. I remember after we were settled in our new home being asked by a real 'University' lady at a dinner-party: 'How do you like living so far out?' I stared vaguely, wondering if she thought we had migrated to Kidlington or Boar's Hill.

In a letter to Dr. Winternitz, January 7, 1904, Joseph Wright mentions the purchase of the land for building, and adds: 'It is to be a big old-fashioned North-country house, built of stone.' We had an architect friend, the late Mr. Edward Ould, a man of real genius, as well as great technical knowledge. To him we explained our needs. Joseph Wright said he wanted a study big enough to hold all his books, and leave plenty of space for him to live and work in it. As to windows, he said: 'None of your casements and leaded-panes for me! I am a



'THACKLEY', OXFORD



book man and want plenty of light.' I pleaded for sunshine and air, and said I must have a south aspect, and high sash-windows which could always be open at the top of the room, even in winter. So Mr. Ould decided: 'You must have a Georgian house', and such was what he built, with two bays, and a classical portico facing due south. He arranged to put in his own 'clerk of the works', who understood all about buying materials and selecting workmen, and thus we should save the builder's profit on the undertaking, and at the same time get a more substantially built house, since it would be to nobody's advantage to 'scamp' work or materials. The foreman bricklayer declared he had never previously laid mortar 'right through' between the bricks; and the men who put down the concrete under the floors said that the amount under the study alone was more than was usually allowed for a whole house. Everything had to be of the best, to suit Joseph Wright's ideas of what a house of his own should be. All the window-frames were made of teak, and glazed with the best plate-glass; and the walls of the ground floor were built of Dorsetshire stone, nearly two feet in thickness. Derbyshire supplied spar to roughcast the walls of the upper part of the house; and Joseph Wright determined that, to crown all, his house should be roofed with stone slates from his native district. His 'Yorkshire roof' was always his pride and joy, and he named his house after his birthplace, Thackley. These slates are almost as big as gravestones, and so heavy that they needed extra thick roof-timbers to support them. We had to have two Yorkshiremen to fasten them into the wood with oak pegs, for no South-countryman would have known how to do the work. I liked to remind Joseph Wright that his patriotic sentiment cost him £5 a truck for carriage alone, from Idle Moor, but I was really prouder than he of our Yorkshire roof, for besides the exterior beauty of its colouring, true to its native county it had very solid and genuine virtues, for it kept the house cooler in summer and warmer in winter than any other roof I have ever known. I suppose the building of a house is generally a very common-

place and prosaic undertaking, mainly a money transaction, but there was an endearing vitality about the growth of our Thackley. That is why we could not bear to leave it when Joseph Wright retired, and still more, why I cannot face leaving it now, absurdly too big though it is just for Grendel and me.

The house was begun at the end of January 1904, and we moved into it at the end of October. For the final two or three months Joseph Wright was himself the 'clerk of the works', and gave all the time he could spare from the 'Workshop' to supervising men and materials, and doing all the business of accounts and wages. Having been a working-man himself, the task was not uncongenial. He was a just and generous master, but he would not tolerate idleness or inefficiency. One day he dismissed all the plasterers, except the foreman. Next day the latter came to say that his Union blamed him for the dismissal of the other men, and had forbidden him to continue the job. Joseph Wright took up the case, and explained to the authorities the man's innocence, and he was reinstated. Naturally Joseph Wright was specially interested in the two men from Idle, and often in after years he liked to tell how when Johnnie and his mate got 'fratching' with each other, the Oxfordshire men clustered round to hear their dialect, which was more than ever rich and strange when tempers were high. Once a quarrel arose between North and South, and a burly Oxonian challenged Johnnie to fight. Now, though Johnnie was little of stature, he was—unknown to his opponent—a famous lightweight boxer in his native village. The result of the conflict was that Johnnie for the rest of his stay in Oxford was treated with immense respect. When the Yorkshiremen's job was completed, Joseph Wright planned to give them an afternoon's outing and a good Yorkshire tea. We hired a landau and took them round Oxford to see Colleges. They did not talk much, but they were delightfully keen on their profession, even when holiday-making. The one thing which interested them was roofs, and hence what gave them the greatest pleasure was the view of Oxford from the top of the Radcliffe Camera. When

we took them into the cloisters of New College, one of them remarked: 'Ah sud think that roof lets water.' That was all they noted of any interest there. Then we came back home, and by Joseph Wright's instructions I had provided a hearty tea, with fried ham and eggs as the *pièce de résistance*. It was a hot day in July, but he said it was essential. Both guests declared it was the only good meal they had had since they came 'down South'.

When the house was finished, and lorries and mortar-grinding machines all gone, we gave our attention to the garden. The previous owner of the land had put in some good apple-trees and wall-fruit, but the embryo garden he started had been unmade by extensive gravel-pits and other building operations. A professional landscape gardener submitted a design with curly walks and romantic shrubberies, which might have suited a boarding establishment, but did not suit us, even apart from its costliness. So here, too, we did what we pleased, and acted without a fixed contract. The architect's wife thought out a plan for us, and we hired labourers in to execute it. Paths and flower-beds were all to be straight and rectangular, formal, not haphazard, the whole to be in keeping with the 'Georgian' style of house—as the term was then understood, before the present reign of George V had begun. We have lived to find great satisfaction and pleasure in the garden we made for ourselves, not forgetting the beneficent régime of the Oxford climate, which covers new walls with moss, and makes tree-trunks hoary before their time. I have heard our garden described as 'old-world', though it is still in its twenties.

The one dominating centre of Thackley is the study. Indeed, one might almost say we built a study, and grouped the necessary remainder of a house round it. A lady visitor, who only knew Joseph Wright as a learned and serious scholar, seeing his study when it was in the making, exclaimed at its spaciousness: 'You see,' said Joseph Wright in response, 'my wife is founding a Society for the Protection of Cats, and she intends to hold meetings in this room. That is why it had to be so

large.' We made a drawing-room, but we never occupied it; mostly its purpose was that of a sort of 'waiting-room. Joseph Wright may often have been heard to say: 'I don't go into the drawing-room once in a whole year.' The study became our workshop, our living-room, and the place where we entertained our friends. Those who believe that the shades of the departed frequent the spots they best loved on earth, may easily imagine the spirit of Joseph Wright pervading the Thackley study. Here it was that, seated in his arm-chair on one side of the ingle-nook, he became such a familiar figure to many generations of undergraduates—men and women. One of them writing to thank me for a photograph of him taken in his study, said: 'It shows him as we all love to remember him most, with his books in the Library, which for many of us is the centre of your house.' I cannot now tell if our 'Sunday teas' began or not in Langdale House, but certain it is, they grew to be the great feature of Thackley to all our young friends. Joseph Wright used to speak of them as 'our P.S.A.s'. This name was a reminiscence of Windhill days. Amongst a collection of old letters I found one dated April 15, 1896, from the Secretary of the 'Idle P.S.A. [= Pleasant Sunday Afternoon] Society' asking him to distribute prizes and give 'a short address to the men of our P.S.A.' A friend and contemporary of my own student days wrote to me in the summer of 1928, after hearing that I had given up teaching and that I planned to write this Biography:

I wish I *could* write something, but you remember I was Not a Good Student. I would Not learn Philology, perhaps I should say I *couldn't*: because my screen was a fluttering collection of declensions, conjugations, and vowel-changes that I vainly endeavoured to fix in my mind! 'Gothic' sounded nice—that was the day when we delighted in Gothic architecture—but out of the Gothic language I never got much pleasure. Still less out of re-constructed Ursprache. No, the Professor for me began as Betty's husband, gloriously hospitable.

able, genuine, efficient. Welcoming everybody, helping them, giving them not only magnificent Yorkshire teas, but his *time*, his advice, and—just as good or better—his chaff. ‘And how’s South Af.?’ he used to say, as it might be ‘how’s old Bill?’ It seemed to put ‘South Af.’ on a friendly footing and in its proper perspective all at the same time. . . .

Both Joseph Wright and I had grown up with the traditional ‘sit-down’ tea, round a table. ‘Tea is my best meal’, he would say, and even if we were quite alone he liked a ‘Yorkshire tea’, that is, a table generously spread with cakes. ‘Why do we have such mingey teas?’ he said once when a new maid thought one plate of cake sufficient for two elderly people. A Yorkshireman—I have noticed—never sits down to a loaf and a pat of butter, he must always have bread and butter cut and spread for him. In the war-time I had to give up providing it for our guests on Sundays, and the scones and jam then substituted continued to be the fashion, but if any one chanced to offer these to Joseph Wright, he would say: ‘No, thank you, I am the baby of the party, my bread and butter is always spread for me.’ We lengthened the dining-room table to its full limit, and made ready for about a dozen guests, but the number sometimes rose to eighteen in pre-War days. Pastry forms part of a ‘Yorkshire tea’, and to please Joseph Wright there used to be a dish of jam tarts for the company. The custom certainly found favour ‘down South’, for the dish always went empty away. A round cake placed before the host at the end of the table was known as his ‘birthday cake’. ‘Will you have some of my birthday cake?’ he used to say, and a new-comer would hastily wish him ‘many happy returns’. If the well-wisher chanced to be sitting near him, Joseph Wright would add a hearty handshake to his expression of thanks. Once a German lady said: ‘If I had only known it was your birthday, I would have brought you some flowers!’ Joseph Wright then explained that he had ‘a birthday every Sunday’, and the other guests, who knew the joke, would laugh with him. The only drawback to the recur-



ring festival was, as he further explained: 'When it happens that my real birthday comes on a Sunday, then nobody believes me when I say this is my birthday cake.' He always cut such massive slices that the cakes had to be of generous proportions. I used to ask for a 'Midland', or 'South-country' slice, when I had not appetite enough for a 'Yorkshire' one. Besides the proverbial birthday cake, our quince jelly acquired popularity and fame. The *Evening Standard*<sup>1</sup> gave a chatty paragraph about it a couple of years ago, headed 'Story of the Don's Jelly', as follows: 'This morning I met an author who had tied a piece of string round his little finger. "It is to remind me to send a telegram to Dr. Joseph Wright at Oxford", he said, "He is 73 to-day." "My pleasant memories of Dr. Wright at Oxford", said my author friend, as he prepared to send his telegram, "are concerned with the wonderful tea-parties he used to give to students in the house which he had built himself. On these occasions the great man unbent and fed you with quince jelly, for there was a quince tree in his own garden. Still, I believe, if he likes you enough, Dr. Wright addresses you in Yorkshire dialect, and offers you quince jelly".' A correspondent writing to *The Times*<sup>2</sup> says: 'On Sunday afternoons he was like the kind, strong keeper of a human zoo, who set all his specimens at ease while he fed them on the joke of his hebdomadal birthday cake, and cheered them with his hearty laughter.' At the beginning of the Hilary Term there was 'spice-cake' from Yorkshire made by his brother's wife—no real Yorkshireman speaks of '-in-law' relations—for Christmas; and the princely Christmas cake from 'Ozzletwistle'. Nobody had ever heard of this place, or knew how to spell the name, so it had to be explained as Oswaldtwistle, near Accrington. In pre-War days, and especially after Joseph Wright had been the means of instituting a Course for Foreign Students in Oxford, we used to get numbers of young Germans and other foreigners at the Sunday tea-parties. I find in a letter from Joseph Wright to Professor Holthausen (dated March 12, 1902): 'We shall be

<sup>1</sup> November 1, 1928

<sup>2</sup> March 4, 1930.

very pleased to see your pupil and to give him any help we can. . . . We are always very pleased to see foreigners, because a little kindness goes a long way to anyone in a strange land! We sometimes have quite a gathering.' I remember on one occasion we counted fourteen nationalities, including Scotch and Welsh. After tea we always adjourned to the study, or, during the Summer Term, to the garden, where 'the Professor' sat under his quince-tree surrounded by his young guests. He had a wonderful memory for names and faces, and for things connected with each individual. He remembered where a student lived, and the profession of his or her father. He never forgot the Class a former student had taken in the Schools, and he would even remind a High School girl of long ago of the mistakes she had then made when he took Classes in German there when he first came to Oxford. A young friend who used often to come on Sunday afternoons wrote: 'He will enter into every detail of one's daily existence with the greatest interest and kindness. He surprised me one half-term holiday by speaking of my rooms in a Staffordshire rectory as if he had seen them. "The people are kind to you, and you are near the tram line, and can get to and from school easily", and he thought I might go farther and fare worse, as indeed I well might. Nothing was too small for him to be interested in.' The same lady graduate remembers Joseph Wright saying to her: 'Nuns always do well in their examinations, because they have nothing to divert their energy and attention.' 'To me,' she adds, 'this was a most inspiring and helpful remark, and did much to comfort me for my physical inability to share in the life of the average student. One afternoon before my Finals the Professor patted me on the back: "What are you afraid of, Lassie? You're all right." We were coming through the French window from the garden. It was such a kind reassuring tone, and coming from him, I believed I was "all right".' Mrs. Gaskell, in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, says of Tabby, the faithful servant in the Brontë family: 'She had a Yorkshire keenness of perception into character.' Joseph Wright possessed this

faculty in a high degree, combined with warmth of feeling and active kindliness. He had—as has been said of Dorothy Osborne—‘the rare gift of making happiness’. His comment on some little thing one had done, ‘Well, you have made one person happy to-day’, was a very real bit of praise. A Swiss girl, who knew him chiefly at Sunday teas, said of him: ‘The Professor is so comfortable.’ She had felt rather nervous at coming to the house for the first time, but after seeing ‘the Professor’ she wrote home to her parents: ‘Il est comme un bon Papa.’ He had a natural habit of saying the right thing. I shall never forget one striking instance of this. We had been having tea in a thatched cottage in Branscombe, that South Devon village which has dropped little pieces of itself all down a long winding valley, till it ends in the sea. Joseph Wright had been chatting with the inmates, a retired coast-guard and his sister. As we walked down the garden path, to the little wicket-gate at the bottom of the slope, Joseph Wright turned round and called out to the old woman standing in the doorway: ‘Good-bye, Missis, and when you want to get that old age pension, don’t go and ask for it yourself, they won’t believe you. Send somebody else.’ I looked back, and saw her face lit up with pleased content. Perhaps she felt she had verily entertained an angel unawares. But to come back to the graduate I was quoting—she goes on to recall Joseph Wright’s general conversation: ‘He used to say all manner of interesting things, and he was full of stories. He would discuss international finance, for instance, and the effect of inflation. Someone said of him that it was amazing that he should understand the value of money, scholars so rarely did.’ A pupil of mine, now teaching in a Government School in Egypt, who was one of a set of Non-Collegiate young men often present on Sunday afternoons, compares Joseph Wright to Dr. Samuel Johnson. He writes:

Oct. 10, 1930. . . . No other man of my acquaintance could more aptly be described as ‘a big man’, a big man in the sense

that Dr. Johnson was, and Alexander Pope was not, a man whose immense learning had been used to greater advantage than that of merely making it clear to him on every occasion how very superior were his exceptional powers of mind and will to those of his fellows. It was, indeed, not seldom that we, who were privileged to sit at his feet, compared the Professor with the Lichfield doctor. They both had the same broad sympathies, the same unerring psychological insight, which were never more evident than in the tact with which both of them allowed the other person's character and interests, rather than their own, to determine the topic of conversation. It was always a miracle to me, with what readiness, assurance, and ease of mind, the Professor, looking from one member to another of the groups which used to gather round the fireside in his library, could move from an expression of his opinion upon the present economic conditions prevalent in England to a comparison of the educational facilities open to students in Germany with those in England; from a reminiscence of the days when he taught in an English school to the diverting relation of some experience he had had at a country cottage in Yorkshire . . . treating subjects as wide apart as the two poles with equal eloquence and lack of hesitation. . . . It was seldom that any of us openly questioned the opinions of the Professor, even though they often ran counter with orthodox views, our diffidence, I am sure, often being due to the realisation that Johnson was not the only man who had no sympathy for retailers of cant. . . .

Another pupil of mine at Hertford College wrote in 1923: 'I know nothing in Oxford so charming as your tea-parties'; and another wrote (Oct. 7, 1931): 'I am very glad indeed that you are going to make a point in your biography of what I know we all felt when I was up, and what I personally have every reason to appreciate and remember, the Professor's great interest in and kindness to young students in general and individually. Apart from the solid and substantial assistance he gave them, I always think that interest was most happily

expressed in the Sunday afternoons that we used to enjoy with you both at Thackley.' It is difficult to make a selection from the numbers of letters I received in March 1930 from students past and present who counted knowing Joseph Wright 'one of the blessings of Oxford', and still treasure the memory of him 'as a man whose kindness to every student was as noble as his intellectual powers'. The following extracts may perhaps serve to represent the feeling expressed by many: 'To me the Professor was always the epitome of all that was best in Oxford, and to know him was the most tremendous privilege. His was a great life, and it has made the world a better and a richer place.' 'What happy memories I have of his overflowing kindness and geniality. I don't know any more wonderfully "welcoming" house than yours—it is indeed a House Beautiful to all Oxford pilgrims!' 'Meeting him at tea on Sundays was always a most exhilarating and delightful experience, and to one who was unfortunately almost led to cast out the simple things by over-seriousness, the influence of his simple pleasure was very valuable'. 'I loved those nice Sunday afternoon tea-parties, sitting round your festive board, with the Professor at the head of the table. He was so funny and so jolly. I always went away filled with a new joy of living, after I had seen him. I believe it was because he loved and enjoyed life so much himself.' 'I often think of your Sunday parties, which combined home and University life in such a wonderful way, as among the happiest of my Oxford memories. There must be literally hundreds of students past and present whom he helped and inspired.' 'Ever since I went up to Oxford when you and he so kindly opened your hospitable door to me and always had a welcome at those Sunday afternoon teas, I have always considered him one of the kindest of men and the staunchest of friends. When I went to Cuddesdon, he gave me £5 to get books with, which I shall never forget, and since my ordination there has never been a time when I could not rely on his help and support whenever I needed it.' A blind student at St. Hugh's College wrote: 'To have shaken hands with Professor

Wright was a privilege, and one which I shall always value.' A lady visiting Oxford with her two little girls wrote: 'My girls will always remember going to your lovely Yorkshire tea, and the *age*-less human delicious way he made them and me, when I came, feel like daughters. So direct a touch of lively sympathy and understanding made him as young as any of us, and you did not need any circumlocutions to get straight at what he *meant*. Such *real* people are few.' A lady graduate from America wrote: 'May I acknowledge my gratitude for having known Professor Wright since coming to Oxford? Somehow, contact with his personality has enhanced for me the human values of language-study. He seemed to give Oxford itself a deeper meaning and a kindlier aspect. To express my gratitude I am sending a set of his books to the library of the University of Tennessee, where other students will also be grateful for them.' In a letter from a former pupil of mine, just gone out to Hong Kong, the writer tells how he found that the name of Joseph Wright proved a helpful passport in a far-off country: 'I was out to dinner a fortnight ago, and met some people who turned the conversation to Northern England. They began to boast of the great men Yorkshire had produced, and the Professor's was the first name they mentioned. They came originally from a village very near Thackley, and when I said I had met the Professor and his wife we were friends immediately.' Joseph Wright's interest in young people was not confined to Oxford students; foreign students—especially Germans—experienced a like friendliness on his part, and anybody from Yorkshire could be sure of a hearty welcome. A letter from a young German in 1925 shows that not even the War had obliterated happy memories of Sunday teas: 'Allow me to express my heartiest good wishes on your 70th birthday, of which I have read in the German newspapers. You will surely by now have forgotten me. But I myself still think with gratitude and pleasure of the delightful and stimulating hours which I, as a young student, was permitted to spend in your hospitable house in the summer of 1909.' Professor Max

Förster, writing (in German) from Munich (March 1930) said: 'It was characteristic of his great soul that he willingly and liberally helped others out of the store of his own knowledge. We Germans—especially those of us who came to Oxford—owe him much'; and Professor Harting from Groningen wrote: 'Language students lose in him a leader of exceptional abilities, deep knowledge, and great achievements; to me personally he was more. I shall always treasure the memory of a great and good man, who has received and treated me with never-failing kindness and friendliness. The hours I passed in your house are unforgettable to me. To-morrow, in the Seminar where his portrait is, I will try to give my students an outline of Professor Wright's life and work, as an example they may look up to.' It is impossible to quote here all the tributes which show the many-sided sympathy which Joseph Wright extended to people in various walks of life. An old and distinguished friend wrote: 'He was not only so learned, but such good company'; a family servant of the days of my girlhood said: 'He always had a very warm spot in our hearts, he was so kind and homely'; and a young mother wrote: 'It used to be such a pleasure to hear him say as he shook hands, "Well, and how's the family?"' We shall never forget his warm welcomes, and the way he had of making all he said interesting or amusing.' There was an elemental goodness about his personality which called forth love and admiration, as does a wide stretch of moorland, or a starlit sky. Such a nature precludes self-consciousness. He knew his own powers, but he was too great to be puffed up by them. Miss Weisse, who knew him first in the early days of our engagement, recognized in him this quality that I have called elemental goodness, for she writes: 'I have known many people, no-one whom I admired more whole-heartedly than your dear husband. A sense of wellbeing and gladness that such too is human nature in its finest characteristics as he was, was always my feeling even in thinking of him.' She had told me long ago: 'Dr. Wright is a poet, and all the more so because he is unconscious of the fact.'

As may be gathered from the preceding extracts from letters, Joseph Wright's talk at these Sunday gatherings was of wide range. When the young people talked in groups among themselves, he would find opportunity for personal converse with one or another, but usually what he said was addressed to a number of hearers. It might be about books; or it might be things new and old about Oxford, including a list of places in the neighbourhood that a new-comer should visit, connected with the life of some great man of the past, such as Wantage, Islip, Forest Hill, &c. The subject-matter of his discourse intended as entertainment was mostly related to Yorkshire in some way or other. He would pose his hearers with a sentence in the dialect, or recite to them a verse or two from Ben Preston's 'Natterin' Nan', and ask how much of it they had understood. He used to offer a penny to any one who could rightly spell the name of a landlady of ours at Settle, pronounced *Kokul*, and written *Calkeld*. Only once did he have to pay up his penny. But it was his dialect stories which 'brought down the house'. He had travelled in a train near his old home just after a football match between Bradford and Leeds, won by the Bradfordians, and the proverbial scorn of one city for the other was waxing warm, when a Bradford speaker said: 'Ah tell ye what 'tis, ye Leeds Loiners are goin' dahn so mich i' t'warld, at ye'll ev to ev yer letters addressed to Leeds near Bradford suin.' Another favourite was the story of the 'Local Dick' preaching a sermon on the Prodigal Son: 'Aye, ther was guid fathers as well as bad sons i' them deəs [= days]. Ah'll back that lad [= lad's] father kept that koef [= calf] ov 'is twenty year wol [= till] 'e cum 'oame to eit sum on it 'issen [= himself].' Or again, the 'Sunday' tale of the curate who filled up gaps in his sermon material by frequent repetition of his text 'I am the light of the world', till an old woman cried out: 'Wa! lad, if thah art t'leet o' t'warld, thah wants snuffin', an' that reight badly.' It might have been the same curate who was visiting a parishioner on a hot summer's day, and found her ironing by a big fire. He asked if he might move his



chair away from the hearth: 'Ea! lad, but thah wod mak a poor divl!'

Some of his stories culled from our experiences of Yorkshire inns I have given in my *Rustic Speech and Folk-lore*, for example, the story of the landlord who said when I explained that we came from Oxford: 'How's hay down there?'; of his fellow in another village not far distant, who asked if we sometimes went to London, and hearing that we did, said: 'Then you'll happen know my brother'; and of the landlady of the Kettlewell inn whose heart was won over by Joseph Wright's greeting to the extent of giving us tea in her own parlour, out of her Queen Anne silver teapot, with silver teāspoons to match. 'You should always read the landlady's name over the door first, before you go inside,' he added, 'I said to her: "Eh, Mrs. Robison, why, ye're liukin' yunger nor iver!" and I had never set eyes on her before.' Then he would give his reminiscences of Feizor, telling how we tramped over the moors behind Giggleswick Scars looking for this elusive spot, and how one day just when we had given up another vain search, we suddenly espied a little group of houses in a hollow below where we were standing. We hastened down, and found a woman drawing water from a well: 'Is this Feizor?' we inquired, and the woman replied: 'Ah dooan't knoə, but ah'll guə ask t' Missis.' Feizor was reputed to be rather backward intellectually. When we went there the second time, Joseph Wright asked a man how we could best walk on to Austwick. He directed us to follow an obviously roundabout lane. Joseph Wright said: 'But wouldn't that path across the fields be nearer?' 'Oh, aye,' said the man, 'It's mich nearer.' All these tales lose half their savour in cold print, it was the humour, and the natural reproduction of the dialect which Joseph Wright alone could put into the telling, which so charmed his audience. Sometimes he would talk of his boyhood and the old home life in Windhill, concerning which a student writes: 'After one Christmas vacation spent in Bradford in the most bitter weather, I said to the Professor at Sunday tea that it must have

been hard getting up early as a child in the dark mornings in that smoky, foggy place: "It wasn't the dark, it was the *cold*", he said with a shudder.' Here he might go on to speak of local customs of eating special kinds of food at special times, such as 'spice-cake' and cheese at Christmas; 'berry' [i.e. gooseberry] pie at Whitsun; gingerbread and hot milk on Guy Fawkes Day; veal at Idle Tide; and cheese as an adjunct to apple-pie. Often, too, he would recount experiences he had had when teaching or examining women students in Oxford. Amongst these last was the popular story of the 'Romeo and Juliet viva'. A Somerville student had developed German measles after Schools, and though not confined to bed, she had to remain in an isolation house beside the College gateway. Joseph Wright was one of her examiners, and he was deputed to go and give her a 'viva'. The candidate leaned out of an upper window, and he questioned her from below. He said she threw down chocolates to him, which we—the listeners—denounced as bribery and corruption. A favourite story of his was the story of how he once went to see 'the Eights'. At his Class in the morning he had preached on the evils of 'Eights Week', when students thought of nothing else but the river, and boat-races, and general social gaiety, with the result that all work was interrupted, and a great deal of time wasted. On returning home, some friends from Yorkshire appeared unexpectedly, and wanted specially to be shown the famous 'Oxford Eights'. Joseph Wright was obliged to comply with their request, and was seen by his pupils doing the very thing he had anathematized that morning in Class. 'It was remembered against me for years', he used to say at the finish. With still greater zest he would relate the tale of the chaperon. When he first came to Oxford no woman student might go alone to be coached by a man tutor. A Somerville student used to come to him for German one afternoon a week in the A.E.W. Rooms. With her came an old woman who sat there knitting throughout the lesson. Joseph Wright could not bear the incessant click of her needles, and thinking 'to tire the old woman out', he

one day gave the student a lesson which lasted two and a half hours: 'And then,' he continued, 'I learned that she was paid by the hour! So I went to the Principal of Somerville, and told her that if Miss — must have her chaperon, I should have one myself as well, and he should be an old man who would smoke a clay pipe. She saw the joke, and the old woman with her knitting-needles never came again.' (The chaperon of those days was paid at the rate of one shilling per hour.) He enjoyed recounting how his genial jokes had sometimes put his pupils to the blush. In the war-time when he lectured to audiences of sixty to a hundred women students, there was, he said, one young man among them, "whom I called "my sole remaining joy"". At one of the lectures he requested this young man to hand round a printed synopsis of the subject-matter: 'Don't blush, Mr. Smith', he added cheerily, to the increased discomfiture of the said youth. In a German Class he once had a young man and a girl who might constantly be seen working together in the Taylorian Library. The girl for some time took the lead in Class, and then it was the man who knew more of the work. One day when the latter answered a question correctly, which the girl had failed to answer when previously asked, Joseph Wright remarked: 'Now, Miss —, if you are not careful you will have Mr. — singing "The girl I left behind me"'. He always said he could tell students whom he knew personally, what Classes they would get in the Schools, even if he had not actually taught them. He would often astonish a fireside group on Sunday by saying he could tell whether they were nonconformists or members of the Church of England, by hearing them repeat the clause in the Lord's Prayer following 'Thy will be done'. The test was simple, but it worked out correctly. Nonconformists say '*on* earth', whilst people brought up on the Book of Common Prayer preserve the archaic '*in* earth'. Occasionally somebody would affirm that he or she belonged to the Church of England and yet would normally say '*on* earth', but further questioning brought to light either that the speaker had been taught the Lord's Prayer

originally by a nonconformist nurse, or that church attendance was of recent growth in the family. Once Joseph Wright and I had a discussion as to the meaning of 'broccoli'. He said it denoted curly cabbage, and I said it was a variety of cauliflower. We agreed to put the question to everybody who came to the house for the next week. The result was a large majority on my side, only a few North-country people siding with Joseph Wright. I see that the Oxford Dictionary gives all its weight in support of the cauliflower sense, whilst the Dialect Dictionary gives the curly cabbage meaning as unique for Yorkshire, with Joseph Wright himself as the one authority. He scored a brilliant victory over the question of the right pronunciation of the word *laundry*. It came up when he was lecturing to the women students during the War. Joseph Wright pronounced the stem-vowel as in *lawn*, and I as in *aunt*. He put it to the vote at his next lecture, and only one hand went up for my pronunciation, and the owner of that hand was a Miss Saunders. In the October Term we sometimes refreshed our Sunday guests with apples from the garden, and I would tell them the secret of 'the little rift'. Joseph Wright held that there was 'no apple to beat the Blenheim Orange', and I was a staunch upholder of Cox's Orange Pippin. The company ate both kinds of apple, but politely refrained from voting where matrimonial discord was concerned.

From the time when Joseph Wright first came to Oxford he always manifested an active interest in women's education. As far back as the days of our engagement I can remember him telling me that the then popular notion that a University course turned a woman into an unpractical and unfeminine 'blue-stocking' was in his opinion absurd: 'Higher education', he said, 'ought to fit a woman for anything; even buying cabbages should be done better by a well-educated woman than by an ill-educated one.' The Statute granting Degrees to women in Oxford was passed—he always said 'rushed through'—when he was lying ill in the Leicester Infirmary, so that he was

unable to take any part in the discussion at the time, but he often expressed his views very frankly at our Sunday gatherings. He urged that if women did the same work as the men, they should be equally rewarded by having the B.A. Degree, but he, personally, would not have made them voting members of the University. He thought them as voters less independent in judgement than men, and apt to run in a body like sheep in one direction or another. 'Women', he said, 'are parasites on the University. They contribute nothing, they cannot, because they have no endowments. They cannot create a Chair, or found a Readership.' I well remember hearing him say, to a girl undergraduate: 'You forget you are only six weeks old, while the men are six hundred years old.' He thought women tended to become unreasonably aggressive, claiming a 'right' to the liberties and privileges of the men, and at the same time expecting to be treated with the deference and consideration due to women as such. Although Joseph Wright himself was far more practical and business-like than most scholars—'worldly' he would have called it—he often used to say that Oxford had become too commercial, a place which purveyed learning as an industrial enterprise: 'It is really a great factory, only we don't have chimneys.' And the result of it was that the minds of the teachers and the taught were solely bent on the mere passing of examinations. Older people have sometimes told me that they marvelled at the respectful manner in which the young listened to Joseph Wright and accepted what he said. This was largely because his perceptive faculty was so sensitive, and so constantly alert, that neither when in humorous or serious vein was he ever boring or dictatorial. He never posed, and he was never patronizing; he commanded respect because he never consciously employed means to attain it. He was always ready to give advice to any one who really desired it, but his feeling about it was this: 'If my advice is asked, I expect it to be followed. Nobody need consult me, but if I give my mind to a subject, I don't want my time wasted.'

He used to say he did not like philosophy, there was 'too

much hair-splitting' about it, but he was the embodiment of that practical philosophy which makes for cheerfulness and equanimity. That is one reason why he never fretted or worried. 'I have always looked at the bright side of life', he wrote of himself. I suppose to some extent he inherited this disposition from his parents. His mother's dauntless spirit carried her cheerfully through the severest of hardships, and though his father lacked 'grit', he possessed such a fund of gay good-humour that misfortunes never depressed him. Then, too, Joseph Wright was endowed from birth with a remarkably strong physique, as all his early achievements show, and there is nothing so conducive to good spirits as good health. He used to say, 'I don't know what it is to have "nerves"', and in one of his letters to me he wrote: 'I am not the least bit nervous. I have nerves of steel.' Once in the early stages of the *Dialect Dictionary*, I said to him: 'What would you do if the "Workshop" were burnt down in the night?' 'I should begin again to-morrow', he replied. If a misfortune could be remedied, he would think out the ways and means, but if there was nothing to be done, he did not waste words, time, or energy on useless murmurings. I never knew him even grumble about the weather. If I complained of rain or gloom, or bewailed the damage done to the garden by a thunder-storm, he would say: 'It can't be helped. We must put up with it.'

A 'Letter from John Bull' to Joseph Wright a few years ago ran: 'Learned Sir, You are a living verification of the adage that "it's grit as does it".' Everybody knows that Yorkshire is specially famous for producing this 'grit', which may sometimes be misapplied. The example I quoted in my *Rustic Speech* has since been outdone by a woman. *The Times* of January 12, 1917, records: 'An old lady who died this week in Scarborough, at the age of 94, had spent 72 years in bed. At 21 she became engaged to be married, but her father refused his approval, and in her disappointment she took to her bed. . . . She suffered from no complaint until the end, when she was only ill two

days.' Mr. Stanley Baldwin might have had Joseph Wright in his mind when he said: 'The essential virtue, if you are to make anything of your life, is diligence. . . . Diligence seems so commonplace that when we see a great accomplishment of learning, of discovery, in statesmanship, in what you will, we are always inclined to attribute it to genius, to good fortune, to anything and everything except that very power of concentration and continuous work which is its very foundation.'<sup>1</sup> If Joseph Wright talked about his own success in life, he would say it was simply the result of 'hard work': 'One can get on in any particular sphere of life if one has the will, determination, and power of application. There is hardly anything in England that one cannot become except the king!'<sup>2</sup> Hard work and economy, especially in youth, was what he preached, but like Chaucer's 'poure Persoun', 'first he folwede it himselve.' 'It's not what a man addles [= earns], but what he saves that makes him rich' was a frequent text when counselling economy. At the same time he would often warn young people against setting too high a value on money: 'Don't think too much about cash, and so waste unnecessary time and energy on things which bring in nothing beyond pounds, shillings, and pence, such as correcting examination papers. Live modestly, spend sparingly, give less time to mere amusement, learn more, and do some work of your own. The great thing is to publish something whilst you are young, and then have some cards to lay on the table to show people what you are capable of doing. Even from a commercial point of view, it is a sounder policy in the end, for you will be qualified for the better posts. And remember you cannot become expert at anything without a good deal of work. You must make up your mind to face drudgery. All work is drudgery if you know your job, but you get to like it.'

Being a self-reliant man, he was fond of quoting the maxim, 'Please yourself, and *one* person is sure to be pleased'. He had

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address as Chancellor of St. Andrews University. Vide *The Times*, May 12, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *Tit-Bits*, Feb. 28, 1925, p. 5.

no desire to quarrel with anybody, but his theory—put in his own words—was: ‘If a man tries to get on with everybody, tries to please everybody, he will never get very far—there is not much in him. If a man has no enemies, he is not worth much.’ His admiration for self-reliance caused him often to say: ‘Never have to do with people who think they are going down in the world. I like to deal with people who think they are going *up*. They are the people I like to help.’ This was why he was so keenly interested in the careers of young men and women just starting out in the world. As an instance of the practical nature of his encouragement and help, I may record here that one of my former pupils attributes her good health and successful power of making her own way in the world, to a big gift from Joseph Wright which enabled her parents to follow the doctor’s urgent advice and send her to Switzerland for six months.

It follows from what I have recorded of Joseph Wright’s powers of conversation, that he could talk with anybody about anything. One of my brothers, who is a retired banker, said he never met any one outside the profession who knew so much about banking as did Joseph Wright. It was a constant wonder to me how he had amassed such detailed and accurate knowledge about such a variety of things and subjects, and places too. Once after a conversation at tea-time with an Austrian Professor, I said: ‘I never knew before that you had been in Prague. You spoke as if you knew it well.’ ‘I have never been there in my life’, replied Joseph Wright. Some well-informed people talk like a handbook, or a Baedeker, and inspire me with a wish to concentrate on darning stockings by my own fireside. Joseph Wright’s talk was never of that type. Sir Charles Firth said of him in this connexion: ‘He systematized the information he gathered. He had a systematizing brain for everything, not only for making Grammars.’ You could seldom tell him anything he did not already know. He picked up information from advertisements; and *Whitaker’s Almanack* was almost a Bible to him. ‘What I learn, I never forget. There are



not many memories like mine', he wrote in one of his letters to me. He regularly every week went through all the advertisement pages in *Punch*, he said they reflected so much of present-day life. I remember once at a luncheon-party, when, as sometimes happens, a sudden lull arose in the buzz of general conversation, Joseph Wright could be heard saying pleasantly to his neighbour: 'Cheap claret is made by the action of nitric acid on steel filings.' In this case, it was by a mere accident that a scrap of information was dislodged from its context, and landed where it was not applicable. Dr. White, the Dean of Christ Church, said of him in a letter to me (March 2, 1930): 'When he dined in the Merton Common Room I used to listen to him and I remember still the things he said, and the delightful way he had of imparting all sorts of information as if it were mere amusement.' Gossip in any form he detested. 'He—or she—is a low-class gossip' was about the severest criticism I ever heard him pass on anybody.

During the Dialect Dictionary years, and when engaged on a new Grammar, he had no time or thought for reading books outside his subject, except when we were on a holiday, and then he mostly gave his brain a rest, and read nothing at all, except a newspaper. He often said he 'never could read novels'. With the exception of Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, this was literally true. He was not a great lover of Dickens, finding him 'too long-winded'; and of George Eliot's novels I fancy he only knew *Silas Marner* and *The Mill on the Floss*, though he possessed a complete set of them. He had hundreds of dialect novels which he bought when collecting material for the Dialect Dictionary, and before we were married and I took on that bit of the work, he may have run through many of them, marking words to be excerpted, but that was 'reading' in a very specialized sense. He had an avowed scorn for books which were only words and 'style'—written, in his opinion, with a view to effect, and with no other purpose or meaning: 'A silly book', he would say, 'I couldn't read it.' He bought all the volumes of 'The Temple Shakespeare' after he came to Oxford,

and used to read a Play at night, before he went to bed. In the last years of his life, when too tired to read Philology, he used to read Biographies for hours a day, storing his memory with all sorts of details about the lives of statesmen and historians. Among his books are nearly forty volumes of the 'Men of Letters' series which he read in bed, when recovering from an illness; and a large number of the books written for 'The Home University Library' series, on all sorts of subjects: Napoleon, Nerves, Buddhism, Irish Nationality, Common-sense in Law, The Renaissance, The Navy and Sea Power, &c. These he read when picking up his strength after his operation. He had the true scholar's respect for serious work in his own, or indeed in any subject. He never wasted time in a lecture, or valuable space on a printed page, in abuse or ridicule of the theories of forerunners or fellow-workers in his own field. He would say that good work commanded veneration, even if one does not agree with the writer's opinions. 'He is a great worker,' was his response to adverse criticism of another author, 'that we must say of him.' But loose and vague English, and above all, inaccuracy, would put a book beyond the pale of his admiration: 'If the author is wrong in facts and statements I can control, it makes me doubt the others I can't control.' Accuracy with him was almost an instinct, and he would correct my most trivial mis-statements, for in this matter he ever remained the schoolmaster. I said 'Blackhall Street', and forthwith came 'Road' from Joseph Wright, though he had not been taking part in the conversation. More than once in speaking of our journey North one summer, I said the train would arrive at 1.50: 'At 1.51', emended Joseph Wright. It may have been partly this love of verbal exactness, coupled with the grammarian's respect for language, that made any exaggerated expression, or common colloquialism—apart from dialect—distasteful to him. He was not given to exclamatory phrases, and he disliked slang of any sort, and did not even take the trouble to learn the meaning of modern slang words which are creeping into the standard language, especially since the War. Mary was

not allowed to bring home slang from school, but, young as she was, she had a strong feeling for language, and to be told to avoid using a word was an added interest, and not a bar to her flow of speech.

Neither in youth nor age did Joseph Wright ever care to play cards. He did not even late in life take to playing Patience, which is the resource of so many people when reading becomes a strain on failing energies. This was not due to adherence to old home tradition, but simply that he took no interest at all in card-games; they were to him a dull method of consuming time. When his two brothers stayed with us twenty-five years ago, I bought a pack of cards, and we played whist every evening for their entertainment, but the cards have not been touched since. He never lost the keen sense of the value of time, acquired in his boyhood, and until failing strength obliged him to give up the habits of a lifetime, his daily routine was modelled on principles of economy of time. We breakfasted at 8 a.m., and dined in the middle of the day. Joseph Wright said he was 'a working-man' and needed his dinner at midday, and in my old home nobody thought of dining late. When the Dictionary was finished and he was working all day at home, he regularly sat at his study table from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. After his dinner he took a nap, and then a good walk with me till tea-time. He then worked from 5 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., and again—after a light supper—from 8 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. After that he wanted about an hour's quiet smoke, to clear his brain before going to bed, but often he was still pondering on linguistic problems. He used to say that he felt it a nuisance to have to dress and eat breakfast, so keen did he feel on waking up in the morning to 'get down to work'. Sometimes at night, when he was already in bed, and I not, he would say: 'Just run down and write this on a slip, to make sure that I think of it tomorrow.' He smoked when writing at his table, but the business must have consisted mainly in restarting a forgotten pipe, for he ran through a whole box of matches every day when at work on a Grammar. The newspaper he read for ten minutes or so after breakfast

and dinner; and odd scraps of time he would fill up by writing a letter. He was careful to answer business letters promptly, but he rarely wrote a letter which was not necessary, he found no time for such. His maxim on the subject was, 'If you leave letters alone long enough, they answer themselves'. When people wrote to him asking for the derivation of local names for bits of the parish in which they lived, or of words used by the oldest inhabitant, or complained that they could not find their pet bit of dialect under its special pronunciation in the Dictionary, I answered the letters. People he suspected of desiring only his autograph got no answer at all. When I once said to him, 'I wish you would sometimes brush your own coat yourself', his reply was, 'Be thankful you've married a man whose time is worth something better than brushing his own coat'. Of course I was devoutly thankful, so I did the brushing, and had nothing more to say. He gave me a like unanswerable response once when I was doing another small service for him—perhaps clearing up brown paper and string off the floor, after he had opened a parcel of books—'See,' I said, 'what a self-sacrificing wife you have got!' 'That's nonsense,' said Joseph Wright, 'you like it!'

The mention of a coat recalls to my memory that he once told me he had never in his young days at Windhill put on his coat by himself, his mother always helped him. Further, he told me he never possessed an overcoat. He bought one for the first time when we were married, and though it became almost green with age, he still wore it for the rest of his life. Sometimes, in a mild winter, he wore 'the new one', and would proudly tell people it was a Yorkshire coat, made out of cloth given him by a West Riding friend who made that kind of grey water-proofed material. The 'new' coat was made just before the War, and lived to be only 'new' by comparison with its fellow. He was likewise very proud of his 'new gown', the material for which also came from Bradford, and was presented to him by the maker thereof. His old academic cap I could not persuade him to replace. He liked to say he had 'worn it for 40 years',

and its shabby hue and battered corners gave him satisfaction in the wearing.

It was in the spring of 1926 that we first had the wireless, when Joseph Wright could no longer work late in the evening, and from that time onwards it proved a source of much enjoyment. Nevertheless, anybody who referred to his having the wireless in his study would be told by him: 'If I were ten years younger, I wouldn't have it in the house—it wastes time.' He did not care to listen to Plays, and he could not endure 'jazz', or the caperings of modern composers of the school of Bela Bartok, which were to him 'mere noise'. He was naturally a lover of good music, and the works of the old masters appealed to him at once, though they were new to him, for he never had the leisure to attend concerts, even when he had the means to afford them. He seemed to understand the works of Beethoven and Bach, and find therein comfort and delight. A modern 'Symphonic Poem' with a title such as 'An Oasis in Arabia', or 'Spring-time in a Glade', might as well have been called 'A Backyard in Birmingham', or 'Winter in the Water-mains', for all the meaning or poetry we could find in it. He had pronounced opinions about songs. The 'Community Singing' he loved, and all the best-known solo songs, but the majority of the songs transmitted he would stigmatize as: 'That's t'tiun t'owd cah deed on' [= the tune the old cow died of]. 'I only know homely, simple songs' he wrote in one of his letters to me. He used to come down to breakfast singing in a fine sonorous voice snatches of old-time music-hall ditties, such as:

Polly said she loved me,  
But she told a fib.  
Said she never loved another,  
But she did.

Bobby Lowe burnt his fingers  
With playing with matches;  
This I spake to the clouds  
As they rose in the air.

Robert Lowe's attempt to put a tax on matches was made in the year 1871. Probably most of the other songs are of about the same date, and were picked up by Joseph Wright as a boy between fifteen and seventeen.

If I happened to use the phrase 'done my best', he would rejoin with:

Johnny West, 'e did 'is best,  
'E cudn't diu na mooare.  
'E tuk a rope an' 'enged 'issen,  
Be-int t'kitchen dooar.

As long as we could go out together for our customary afternoon walk, he was almost sure to repeat:

Sally, put thi bonnet on,  
An' tak a walk wi' me,  
Ah'll whisper dahn thi ear-'oil [= hole]  
Hah dearly Ah luv thee.

Amongst his other favourites were: 'Johnny Morgan played the Organ', 'Polly will you go to the Ohio?', 'Kiss me quick and go, my Honey', 'Sailing down the river in an old Steam-boat', 'Wait till the clouds roll by, Jenny', and:

This life is a difficult riddle,  
For how many people we see,  
With faces as long as a fiddle,  
That ought to be shining with glee.

The first lines of hymns, too, were often on his lips. A young friend of ours, named Grace, was always greeted by him as 'Grace is flowing like a river'; and I remember seeing in a street in Germany a party of obvious Jews driving by, and Joseph Wright chanting quietly, 'Jerusalem my happy home'. As a young man in Windhill, he bought himself a violin, but his fingers were too big and broad for him ever to become an expert violinist, though he had a musician's ear. Whistling he could do to perfection, and a way he had of putting two fingers between his teeth, and emitting a sound which would summon a sheep-dog off a distant mountain, was a terrifying art at close

quarters. His sense of hearing was remarkably keen, and age never impaired it; moreover, he had early trained himself to detect the slightest variation in speech-sounds, and to recognize and locate any dialect accent. I remember a specially striking instance of this power. A girl from the restaurant car in a train from Exeter to Oxford came and asked us if we wanted tea: 'You come from Bradford', said Joseph Wright, before she had had time to say more than the one sentence, and he was quite right, she did come from Bradford. I myself had noticed nothing, for she could not be termed a 'dialect-speaker'. Not very long ago, when we were having tea with a Yorkshire friend, the latter turned on a gramophone<sup>e</sup> record purporting to be genuine dialect of the district. When it came to an end, Joseph Wright said to his host: 'Would you like to know how many mistakes there were in that? Twenty-seven!'<sup>1</sup> He was fond of taunting me with the fact that I said *years* for *ears*, and then I retorted by quoting my old Nurse's phrase for 'long ago', namely 'years and years and donkey's ears', where a North-countryman misses the subtle play on words. However, I would not allow that I was guilty of the worse Southernism of saying 'idear of', and the 'Indiar Office'. Joseph Wright's own speech always retained the Northern tinge. A journalist on the staff of a Yorkshire paper came once to get his opinion as to whether it was 'advisable for a young Yorkshireman to attempt to rid his speech of Northern idiosyncracies'.<sup>2</sup> The question was a difficult one to answer, for unless it is very carefully done, a 'cultivated' accent grafted on a local one produces a horrible hybrid; and on the other hand, the speaker has to be a big man, like Joseph Wright, to carry an English dialect into the higher social ranks, and be able to say, as he did: 'I can afford to retain my accent.' This was the gist of the matter the interviewer had for his paragraph. Joseph Wright also retained certain dialect expressions, a yellow cat, for instance, was always 'a chintz cat'; and food insufficiently cooked was 'not enough'. He would

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, Aug. 24, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> *Yorkshire Evening Post*, Oct. 25, 1928.

frequently address girls as 'Lass', or 'Lassie', and young men as 'Lad'. When reading the Bible at family prayers I could never be sure that he would hit the right pronunciation of the word *bow* in accordance with the meaning. He talked of the 'baller' in a cricket-match, but that was not a variant of *bowler*, but a derivative of *ball*. He had the gift of making his dialect attractive, so that even quite unlikely people listened to it with enthusiasm. Here is an extract from a letter written by a man who came to see him for the first time, and to whom Joseph Wright read some selections in the West Riding dialect from his *Windhill Grammar*. Jan. 2, 1927: 'It was the greatest treat of our visit to hear the hearty Yorkshire voice of your marvellous husband, first as a dialect speaker, then as an unrivalled scholar expounding the technique of dialect in the most fascinating way. It was quite hard to say goodbye.'

In describing our Sunday teas, I have written of students flocking to the house as disciples clustering round a beloved master, but I cannot attempt to do justice to the visits of the individual eminent scholars who came from time to time, ever since we first settled in Oxford in 1896—friends of Joseph Wright's here, and from other English Universities, Professors from America, and from the various Continental Universities. Joseph Wright knew personally most of the leading German philologists. I remember one thrilling evening when we had with us Professor Brandl from Berlin, Jiriczek from Würzburg, and Schick the Professor of English Language and Literature from Munich. After dinner they were all talking philology in the study. I can still recall how over some new etymological theory under discussion, Professor Schick slapped his knee with a resounding smack, and exclaimed: 'Ha! that excites!' There really was excitement in the air. At other times it might be a gathering of Englishmen. Professor Morfill was one of our most delightful visitors, he was such a brilliant conversationalist. We always said that if we could get him to come to a dinner-party, it was certain to be a success. He had a way of talking about English literature with a knowledge and



enthusiasm all his own, and yet at the same time he placed his listener on a level with himself, and never 'talked down to' the ignorant. I used to go and see him when he was too old and feeble to leave his own house, and he was still as keen as ever, quoting poetry and prose, and talking as if I knew as much about each author as he did himself. He and Professor Grierson—then of Aberdeen University—who edited the Poems of John Donne, both dined with us once, and the two talked Donne all the evening, whilst Joseph Wright and I listened with intense interest. We very seldom gave dinner-parties, and did not often go out ourselves, but one or two evenings such as these stand out in my memory. I remember coming home from a like gathering when Joseph Wright said: 'I could not go to too many dinner-parties of that sort. It was like drinking champagne.' We had been dining with Professor and Mrs. Jacks in Holywell, to meet Professor Henry Jones—Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow—and Mrs. Jacks's sister, Miss Stopford Brooke. Sir Walter Raleigh was a frequent visitor when he lived near us in Northmoor Road. Occasionally he was depressed and silent, but usually he was very entertaining with his sudden bursts of humour and witty turns of speech. 'Will you have some quince-jelly?' I said to him once when he came to tea with us, and for a reply he said: 'I think Eve in the Garden of Eden said, "I am tired of eating raw fruit, I must have something to make into jam". So the Almighty created quinces.'

The War put a stop to dinner-parties, and then came Joseph Wright's operation, and the need for careful diet, so that our evenings became more and more consistently spent alone by our own fireside.

#### IV. HOLIDAYS

One reason why Joseph Wright could accomplish so much work, and yet retain day after day, year in, year out, his normal vigour, was that he could always switch his mind off his work if he wished. He could shut his eyes for his regular afternoon

nap, be asleep in five minutes, and wake up at the appointed time. In like manner he could shut up his books, and turn his whole mind to the enjoyment of a holiday, and that with the same keen enthusiasm he put into his work. But then a holiday must be a holiday, he must have liberty and space. Even when we went abroad, we eschewed museums and galleries, and sought the mountains. We did not go and stay with people we knew, because he liked the freedom of being by ourselves. Certainly, in Germany we used to spend a few days with old friends in Heidelberg, but then the entire change from English life made it a refreshment. He never thought of running off for 'week-ends', and very rarely went up to London for the day. When people talked to him of the pleasure of going to London, Joseph Wright used to say: 'The thing I like best when I go to London is when the train whistles to start back to Oxford.' He never played any outdoor games. He said it was because he could not see a ball. We once tried playing golf, but only for one afternoon, we neither of us cared a bit for the pursuit. He was keen on following the fortunes of Yorkshire in the cricket or football season in the newspaper, or on the wireless, but neither he nor I ever wished to stand and look on at a match. Further, we shared a dislike of 'sport' of the kind the proverbial foreigner thinks of when he says that 'an Englishman gets up in the morning saying "Hullo! here's a fine day, let's go and kill something".' About once in three years we went to the theatre, either to a Shakespeare Play or to a Gilbert and Sullivan Opera; and Joseph Wright liked to tell people that we had one 'annual outing', namely, when we walked down to Greenwood's shop in St. Giles' to eat an ice. Both these jollifications lapsed during the War, and were not resuscitated. He took three weeks of holiday at Easter, and a month in the summer, and always we must go where there were hills. If we went to the sea, it must be where there was a background of hilly country, as at Sidmouth in South Devon, or at Minehead in Somerset. Our one form of recreation was walking. We never made walking tours, we returned to our base at night,

we did not try to beat records, for we took our own pace, and sat down to rest for an hour or more, when so disposed. A snapshot taken in 1917 on the hills near Minehead shows Joseph Wright with his pipe, and myself with my sewing, and the faithful MacGregor sitting on guard beside us. In his best days Joseph Wright could easily do fourteen or fifteen miles in a day, and he might boast when he returned home in the summer that altogether we had walked as far as from Settle to Oxford. Even at the age of seventy he could enjoy six or eight miles for an outing. This does not look much on paper, but in calculating mileage and walking powers, it must be remembered that miles on a Yorkshire moor—where we did most of our tramps—are not necessarily measured by the ordinary standards of rule and tape. We once asked a man to tell us how far it was to a place some distance below where we stood: 'It's two miles there, and three back', was the answer. We never walked fast, but Joseph Wright's pace was extraordinarily steady and regular. Whether or not familiar with his route, he could measure to five minutes how long it would take us to cover the distance. On a morning walk it often happened that he would ask me what time I wanted to be back, and if I said, 'ten minutes to one', he would show me his watch at the door on our return, and the time would be exact to the minute. This was partly due to the faculty he had acquired in youth for knowing the time without having a watch to consult, and partly to what I always termed his 'geographical instinct'. He liked to be independent, and very seldom asked for directions. Maps he never consulted, and I left all questions of route entirely to him. I ordered the food in our lodgings, but when we set out for a walk, I was as care-free as the dog. Once, when we were exploring a new cross-country way to Malham from Settle, I really thought we were lost, in a wide hollow far from any human habitation, but Joseph Wright eventually struck the Malham road just where he expected to find it, and that after gates all the way and no climbing of stone walls. His eyesight for long distances was extraordinarily clear, and no amount of

book-work ever dulled it. I remember our debating once whether to take a twenty-minutes climb up to a farm-house for tea, or whether, in case the people might be gone to market, it would be our wiser plan to push on ahead into Austwick for a certain tea at the inn. Joseph Wright walked on a few paces to where he could get a full view of the house—still quite a long way off—and then called to me: 'It's all right, they are at home, I can see the front door is wide open.'

In hot weather he walked in his shirt sleeves. One day when he was sitting smoking his pipe beside a cart-track above Langcliffe village, with no coat, and an ancient straw hat on his head, a passing farmer seeing this sun-burnt, hearty-looking man idling by the roadside, offered to engage him for the 'hay-time'. It was a drop in the social scale to be taken for a 'hay-time man', because the previous day he had been supposed to be a tenant farmer. A curate, distributing a newly arrived troop of boy scouts on a camping ground, had come up to us with fair speeches of thanks, and when Joseph Wright looked surprised, the curate said: 'I thought you were the farmer who had given us leave to camp here!' One of the excitements of our moorland walks was the finding of mushrooms. He had an unerring eye for even the smallest mushroom quite a long way off, and could recognize the 'pasture mushroom', or 'the moorlander' as to the manner born. I was not such an expert, so I gave up looking, and only carried the bag. We enjoyed eating the spoil at breakfast, but the real pleasure was the hunting.

We began going to Settle for our summer holiday in 1900, when we had both our children—Mary aged three, and Willie Boy aged two—and we took them there again in 1901. But in 1902 when we had only Mary, we sought new scenes, and went to Hawes. It was not such a good centre for walks, and though we had rooms in rather an elegant villa, the whole aspect of the place was sleepy and not very interesting. Joseph Wright did not approve of our quarters because of the unpunctuality of the meals. 'Mother forgot to put on the vegetables' was the excuse for dinner sometimes an hour late. We ventured to

think 'Mother' ought not to be burdened with the responsibility of the pot and the clock, for she was nearly ninety years old. Even on a holiday Joseph Wright could not tolerate unpunctuality. It was a happy-go-lucky place altogether. One Monday morning I had no meat for our early dinner. There was only one butcher in Hawes, and as he was having a quiet day, no meat could be bought. A kindly neighbour suggested that I could get a fowl at the greengrocer's, so I betook myself to a humble shop the other side of the road: 'Oh, certainly you can have a fowl', said the greengrocer, and he opened a door into a backyard, and showed me his cocks and hens all alive and running about, unprepared for anybody's dinner except their own. Time to Hawes was of little consequence. We had been spending a night away in an old Border mansion, with a vast panelled and galleried hall, and everywhere polished oak floors. Mary—accurate daughter of her father—carefully counted the number of times she tumbled down. There were cellars under the house spacious enough to lodge a herd of cows and oxen when plundering raiders were abroad. Coming back from our visit, we arrived at Hawes Junction in time to see our train off to Hawes, six miles distant. It was then about 1 p.m. and the station-master told us that the next train was due at 6 p.m., or thereabouts. Mary confidently affirmed that she could easily walk to Hawes. The station-master considered the situation, and finally proposed that we should go down to an inn to which he pointed about a mile away all by itself on the moor: 'If t'landlord hasn't gone to t'market, you might get him to drive you in his trap.' First of all, we telegraphed to Hawes to explain our hold-up, and then we sallied forth to the Moorcock Inn. Happily mine host was at home, so he sent for the odd-job man, and the odd-job man fetched a sieve of corn, and went into the paddock to catch the nag. Having caught and harnessed the nag, he went in search of his coat and town boots. At last all was ready, and we ambled away to Hawes in a 'make haste slowly' style. We had just finished a belated dinner in our lodgings when the telegram arrived!

I can remember going from Hawes to an Agricultural Show at Leyburn, where we sat down to a lunch in a large tent where Dalesmen from far and near were gathered together to eat enormous chunks of salmon and cold beef. It was the first time we had ever seen sheep-dog trials; a thrilling spectacle to dog-lovers like ourselves. The winning dogs were a pair of rough, grey-coated brothers, called Ping and Pong, their names showing that somebody in the district was remarkably up to date, for I see that the New English Dictionary—or, as it is now termed, the Oxford Dictionary—knows not the game of ping-pong before the year 1900, although Messrs. Ping and Pong had been adding lustre to the name for at least a twelve-month. Another day we walked over the 'Butter Tubs' to Muker, mounting miles up into what seemed like clouds with a foothold for venturesome wayfarers, and then descending through the mist out into a road with two or three houses beside it. This was Muker, in Swaledale. I decided that I could not face all those miles back, so we hired the usual horse and trap at the inn. Afterwards I wished I had been less faint-hearted. We were taken over the mountain ridge above Askrigg, and the descent was just untamed moor. Joseph Wright and the driver got down from their seats, and the reins were thrown over the horse's neck, and he was left to clamber down the hill-side like a goat, with me clinging to the back rail of the two-wheeled gig. I sometimes wonder if wandering scholars in the far future will make pilgrimages through those Yorkshire Dales to look upon Joseph Wright's signature, or whether some landlord of the inn at Muker or Airton will sell Volume I of his Visitors' Book for a great price, and Joseph Wright's autograph be carried off to America. Will there perhaps be aircraft pilots booking seats for tourists to take a flying trip over 'the Joseph Wright country'? I shall not be there to see, but they won't in their airships know the joys of the walker on sheep-grazed turf, and they will be too high up to feel 'the bone in the air' that gave us our first thrill on the journey North, when we stepped out on to the platform at Hellifield and sniffed the keen

breeze from the moors. 'Can't you tell you are in Yorkshire now?' Joseph Wright would say with patriotic pride, and a sense of ownership. My last reminiscence of that Hawes holiday is of the encounter with the stranger at the Golden Lion in Settle. We could not travel back from Hawes to Oxford conveniently in one day, so Joseph Wright suggested that we should spend a night or two in Settle at the end of our month, and so shorten our final journey. To this intent we took train thither one day, to seek for lodgings. Having found what we needed, we went to the Golden Lion for some lunch. Here we were put to eat our mutton chops at a long table already occupied by a man and his wife sharing a large bottle of champagne. Joseph Wright fell into talk with the man, and presently the latter became inquisitive as to who and what this genial Yorkshireman might be, who knew so much about the district. He boldly asked pointed questions to try and discover Joseph Wright's trade or profession, and at last, receiving no information he hazarded the remark: 'I tell you what it is, I believe you are a traveller for somebody's artificial manure.' This roused me to put in a word, and I flung out: 'I am quite certain *you* have never in your life sat with your legs under the same table with such a distinguished man as my husband!' I then proceeded to explain. The stranger, being a Yorkshireman, took my speech in good part, and to show the sincerity of his respect, he now insisted on our partaking of the champagne. He told us he had come to see a large house in Giggleswick, which he thought of buying, now that he had retired from business and wished to own a bit of land in the country and settle down. He had chartered a wagonette to take him and his wife to see the place that afternoon, and nothing would please him but that we must join them. So we went, and Joseph Wright gave him much practical advice, pointing out that the house was dark and damp, and would require a big outlay of money to make it habitable. Finally the prospective buyer was so impressed by the wisdom of this chance friend in need, who seemed to be an expert in house-property, that he gave up all

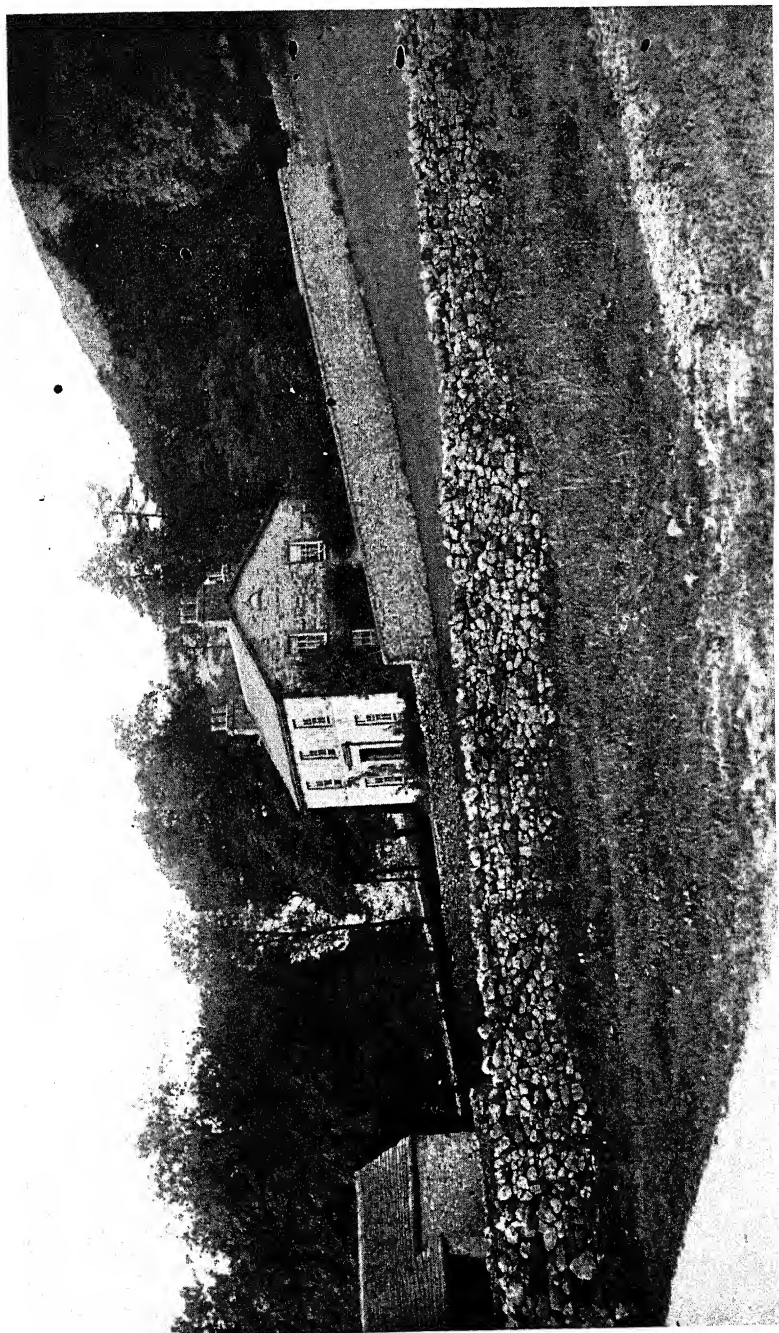
thought of purchasing that particular estate. We heard afterwards that he had bought a house in Long Preston, but we never met him again. It was also at the Settle Golden Lion that we once saw Mr. Walter Morrison, the multi-millionaire, as an old man, lunching on bread and cheese and a pint of beer from the barrel.

In August 1903 we went for the first time to 'Stonelands' in Littondale, a farm then occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John Robinson and their daughter Janie. We were so happy and comfortable that we continued to go there as long as we had Mary with us. The farm, and indeed the whole of Littondale, had become so closely associated in our minds with her, that when she left us in July 1908, we cancelled the plan of going to 'Stonelands' that August, and we never stayed there again. Mrs. Robinson died a few years later, and the place was ultimately turned into the country seat of a Bradford manufacturer. Littondale is more or less a blind alley, for the road up from Arncliffe stops at Halton Gill, a little nest of houses at the head of the Dale. There is a lovely moorland road on beyond, running between Fountain's Fell and Penyghent towards Horton and Settle, but happily it has never been remade for motorists. Another possible exit from Litton itself is up Litton Brow, a track certainly, but I should not like to adventure the climb—or the descent—otherwise than on my own two feet. Litton is a hamlet of Arncliffe, two and a half miles from the mother church, farther up the Dale towards Penyghent. To get there by train we had to go to Grassington, and then drive twelve miles in a wagonette hired out by the Arncliffe carrier. So few and sparse are the houses in Litton that one can hardly believe Mr. Riley's statement that 'more than thirty men of Littondale fought on Flodden Field (1513)'.<sup>1</sup> It is true that Litton had a Post and Telegraph Office which made it an important centre, and that with sufficient dignity to set no store by outward show or officialism. Old Mrs. Battersby, the

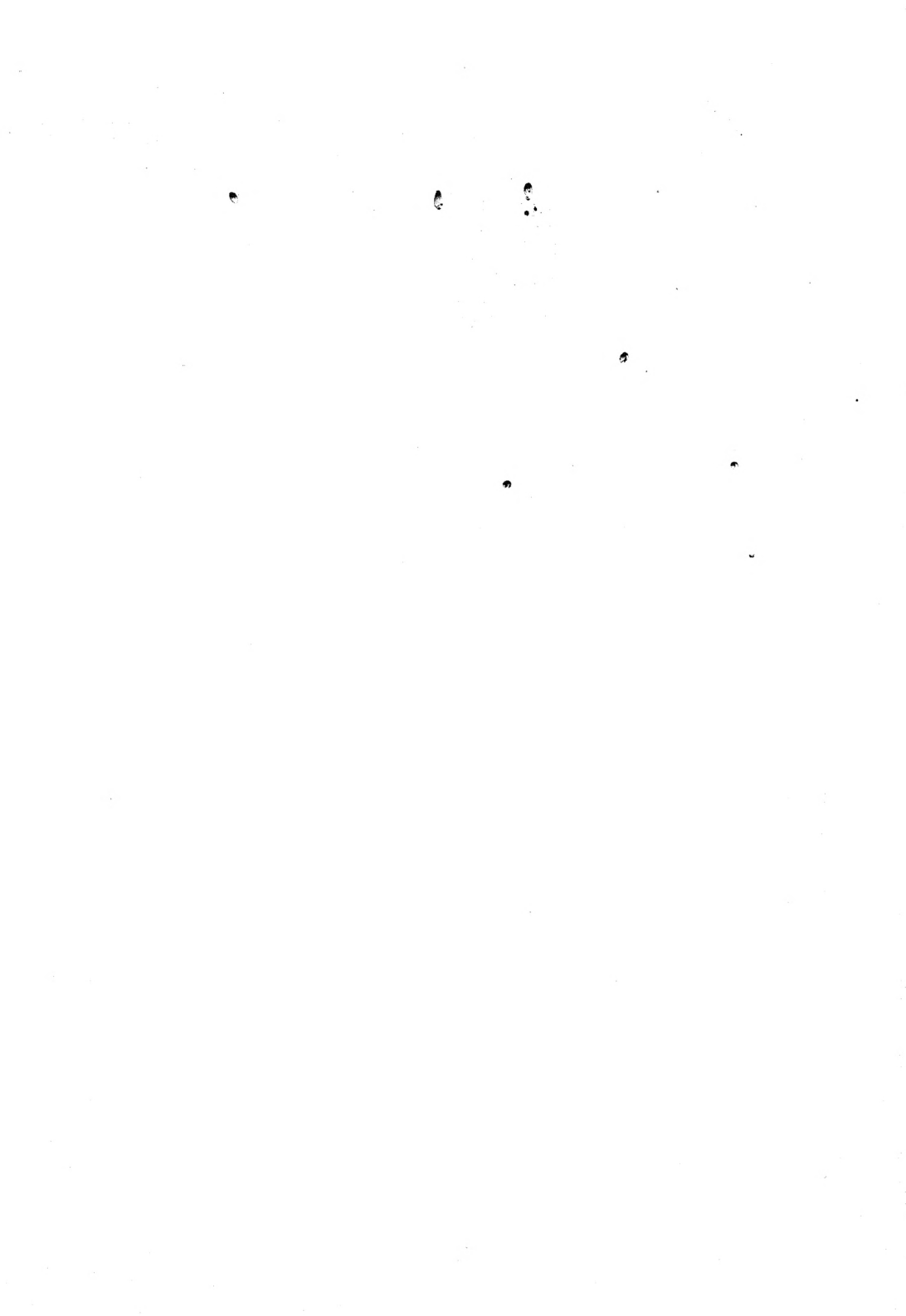
<sup>1</sup> *The Settle District and North-West Yorkshire Dales*, by Frederic Riley, 1923, p. 67.



postmistress, had not studied the graces of abstraction in other concerns, nor the art of slapping change on a counter. Her husband was a tailor by profession. I think he spent his time striding up and down the Dales looking for clients. His name was too long for his signboard, and so, though it began in proud lettering, it had to finish off with a -by in humbler style underneath. It was a forlorn-looking cottage, and when you opened the door, you stepped down into a stone-flagged kitchen. In the dim light, on the back of a settle, you could read one or two placards inviting you to emigrate or enlist, and you might think it really was a Post Office. Mrs. Battersby would then emerge from some back-region and ask you to say again what you wanted, for she was 'a bit 'ard o' 'earin''. Next you would be pleased to take a seat, on a kitchen chair, whilst she busied herself over your behests, one at a time, with pauses in between for her explanations. Only a postmistress could be expected to understand how to fill up a postal order, or what to do with a registered envelope. Once a friend of mine asked if she could buy a bottle of ink. Mrs. Battersby was mysterious, but said it could be had. After some time she appeared with a scent-bottle containing a black liquid: 'Ah mak it mysen, and if it's too strong, ye let it dahn wi' a drop o' cold teea.' How she ever coped with a telegram I cannot imagine, but probably nobody in Litton ever received a telegram. Still, she was in command of a Telegraph Office, and there was none in Arncliffe, for the Arncliffe magnates had refused the innovation. Why should their peace be disturbed by connexion with the busy world? So the posts and wires ran on past Arncliffe and stopped at Litton. We drove to Litton two years ago, and lunched off ham and eggs at the Queen's Head. I bought some picture postcards at the now furbished-up Post Office, and asked after the Battersbys. A comely young woman told me that they were both dead and gone, but that her husband was their son: 'He was at his dinner when you drove past, and he said "If that isn't Professor Wright I'll eat my hat".' The letters were brought from Grassington by Kit Chapman, who



'STONELANDS', LITTONDALE



drove a small wagonette, so that he could fetch and carry passengers and parcels. If you wanted a leg of mutton you told the postman, and he brought it next morning; or you gave him your old boots and asked him to get them resoled. His journey ended at Halton Gill. At our farm, if you had written a letter, you put it in a discarded, doorless oven, let into the wall by the roadside, and you took out of the oven a whitewashed stone, and set it upright on top of the wall, and then Kit would stop his horse and collect your mail. Once the calves collected it before he arrived, and I had to find fresh envelopes and stamps, and rewrite the addresses.

'Stonelands' was a well-built house, with large rooms facing south, and a porch set back into the hall, where Joseph Wright and I used to sit in the evenings to enjoy the absolute silence. When he recounted to his friends the charms of 'Stonelands', he would say it was so quiet there that when we sat out late in the porch we could hear the goods trains going up the incline from Settle to Ribbleshead away on the other side of Pen-y-ghent, whilst I—wishing to be more picturesque—told how we could also hear the footfalls of the ducks as they padded about the field below us searching for slugs in the dewy grass. The bedroom looked east along the hill-side and down the road to Arncliffe, across a tumbling little beck, over which leaned some gaunt Scotch firs—a wonderfully peaceful scene to go to bed with on a moonlight night. Littondale is—and always will be—the Happy Valley to me. It has not the long-drawn-out magnificence of Swaledale, or the rich luxuriance of Dentdale, it makes me think rather of the German word *gemütlich*—so hard to define in English. Littondale is small and homely, reaching out her arms to you with smiles of peace and goodwill.

Our favourite walk from 'Stonelands' was up the Fell at the back of the house, to where the cloudberry grows, showing how high we had climbed. From the top we could look down upon Kettlewell and Buckden in Wharfedale. Once a farmer joined us on our way. He was going to 'tak a liuk' across to his son's farm, to see how he was getting on with his hay on the other

side of Buckden. To hear Joseph Wright conversing with a Dalesman you would have thought his foot had never been off his native heath. He knew all about the value of land in different parts of the district; he knew the seasons for turning cows into the 'fog' grass; or for sending young beasts 'down South'; the prices to be got for rabbits, according as to whether they were shot or snared. For an afternoon stroll we wandered along the banks of the Skirfare, the river which runs down Littondale and jumps into the Wharfe near Kilnsey Crag. The charm of the Skirfare is her freakishness. You may stand on Litton Brig and see her dashing with such mad fury into a cavern she has hollowed out below, that you turn away your eyes from beholding such a picture of remorseless and cruel might; and two or three days later she will be creeping softly round grey boulders, and lapping gently against the edges of smooth flat rocks, as if she would fain turn her bed into a paved highway. I ever bless the Skirfare for her skittish pranks, because once the Bradford Corporation thought to build a dam across Littondale, and make the Skirfare nourish a huge reservoir. But she laughed in her sleeve—her many little sleeves—and trickled her waters away, quick, down deep in the bosom of mother earth, and not all the wise men of Bradford could find her secret sluices. There was no depending on the artful hussy, so they had to go back home, and leave her to let rabbits scamper over her bed; or to run races with her trout, and joining hands with her little sister streams, ripple her skirts along the banks where the spikes of pale campanula grow, past the watery haunts of that daintiest of wild flowers, the Grass of Parnassus.

Mary's pleasure in Littondale was unending. As soon as she was up in the morning, she might begin with: 'May I go and talk to Tom?' Tom was the road-mender, but to name his profession thus seems to lower his rank. He was a man of character and worth, with a substantial rent-roll, and like Jack, our farm-man, of yeoman stock. Jack allowed her to hold the horse's bridle in the field when they were 'leading' hay, and once she came in triumphantly saying: 'I led Appleby with the

cart into the barn!' Another glorious day was when she and Jack climbed through the wood and up the hill-side to look for a lost sheep: 'Jack took my hand, and we went like this', said Mary, executing a few steps like a young ostrich hurrying to catch a train. Sometimes when Appleby's services were not required in the hayfield, Janie drove us out in the trap—Mary and I in front, and Joseph Wright with the back seat to himself. On a level bit of road, Janie would let Mary hold the reins, and the latter would shout: 'I'm driving, Dada, I'm driving!' Joseph Wright expressed a paternal share in this joy, and went on happily smoking his pipe, for in those pre-motor days there was nothing to be met on the road more formidable than a few sheep or a rabbit, and old Appleby could have been trusted to jog along without a rein. One afternoon we were thus driving to Halton Gill—along the only road up the Dale—when we presently came to a yawning chasm impossible to pass with a horse and trap. Tom and another man were engaged on the roof—it could hardly be called a bridge—over one of the tiny becks which are wont in those parts to straggle across the road, unless forced to go under it. They said complacently: 'The postman had gone back, and we didn't expect anybody else.' The road was so narrow at that point that it was no easy matter to turn round; however, with Appleby's nose up against one wall, and Joseph Wright's boots scraping the wall on the other side, we managed to beat a retreat. Mary fed the chickens and ducks, and liked to parade in front of us down the field with a trail of white ducks behind her. 'See my following, Dada!' One year we were going on from 'Stonelands' to Settle for part of the time, and Mary protested: 'Must we go to Settle? There'll be nothing to do there.' Every minute of her day was a delight to her. When it rained, she helped in the kitchen, or played dominoes with Mr. Robinson. The last year we were there it had been a wet August, so I said to Mrs. Robinson on leaving: 'I hope Mary has not been a bother to you?' 'Nay, she's grand coompany', replied Mrs. Robinson, with affectionate fervour. I never forget the last drive down Littondale to the

station at Grassington, when the early morning sun was shining on the 'fog' still wet with dew. 'Fog' is the aftermath when the hay has been cut and carried, and by the beginning of September it is long and lush, and of a wondrous green in that pure air. To people 'down South' the word has only gloomy associations, but the fair beauty of a field of wet 'fog' in a Yorkshire Dale, with the sunlight on it, cannot be described in words, or painted on canvas, it has to be seen to be believed.

When we were alone, without Mary, we could not bear to go back to 'Stonelands', so, in 1908, and for a few years onwards, we went to hotels. Joseph Wright held that it is one's bounden duty to make one's self pleasant to other people in the public rooms of an hotel, just as one would in a private house. Those were the days when people stayed at a country hotel, and Joseph Wright often spoke of the enjoyable evenings he spent in the smoking-room at the Ashfield Hotel in Settle, and how he looked forward to the interesting talk with other men of mark. Now one meets only the passing motorist, pausing in his tour for one night, or perchance two, whose talk is of the bad state of the roads, the poor quality of provincial hotels, of the make of cars, and of running repairs. We stayed once at an hotel in Falmouth. Among the guests was a veteran Colonel, a confirmed *habitué* of the smoking-room. When he talked—and he was a great talker—bad language came tumbling out like toads out of the mouth of the naughty little girl in the fairy-story, but because he seemed friendless and lonely, Joseph Wright made a point of acting kind listener to him. One Sunday he found him silent and unresponsive: 'You seem very depressed to-day, Colonel. How's that?' 'Sir,' replied the Colonel, 'I make it a rule never to swear on Sundays.'

In spite of the attractions of the good company at the Ashfield, we subsequently gave it up in favour of two most delightful inns, the Golden Lion at Horton-in-Ribblesdale, six miles from Settle, at the foot of Penyghent, and the Game Cock at Austwick, not far from Clapham Caves and the shoulders of Ingleborough. In both places Joseph Wright became as well

known a figure as he was in Settle. From Horton we could get on to the moor much quicker than from Settle. In twenty minutes we could reach the nearest 'Pot', the death-trap of a pleasant beck flowing round the feet of Penyghent till it met with this awesome abyss in its path, and fell over the brink and was lost to sight. There is something uncanny about a 'Pot'. You may throw a stone into some of them and hear it in the dark depths 'clink', 'chink' against the sides of the chasm some seconds before you hear the final thud or splash at the bottom. We used to walk on past the 'Pot', and spend our morning sitting beside the beck. From Horton, too, we could walk over the moors to Ribbleshead along the old pack-horse road. This was one of our grandest outings, with the open moor to ourselves for miles round. It seemed strange to come upon a fine stone bridge up there, where nowadays none but farmers and sheep would travel over it. It bears the inscription, 'Anno 1765. This bridge was repaired at the charge of the whole West Riding.' It reads like a proud boast, as if to say: 'See how perfectly sound I am, and never been touched for 165 years. Long live the West Riding!'

The Golden Lion, in true Yorkshire fashion, did not put all its goods in the front windows. You had to live there to appreciate its solid comfort and the warmth of hospitality it offered. There was only one entrance for the guest and the beery tramp, through a glass door with brass rails across it. Inside was first the bar, and beyond it the general dining-room, where the cloth was always spread, and which constituted the only public sitting-room. Here we sat every evening when dinner was over, and in 1914 Joseph Wright read aloud to the gathered company the news of the beginnings of the Great War. I recall how we stood and stared at a notice in the Post Office window in that remote village, which first told us that England had taken up arms. It was at the Golden Lion that in the evenings we made friends with Mr. and Mrs. Yates, a quiet couple from industrial Lancashire, come to spend their one week of holiday in the country, preferring the solitude of a day's fishing



in the Ribble to the crowded sands of Morecambe or Blackpool. Ever since then, every Christmas they have sent us a feast of good things, mince-pies and cakes, and tall loaves of bread, a marvel of lightness, for Mrs. Yates is what Joseph Wright would call a 'champion' bread-maker. Then there was the young man we named 'the Pot-holer', because he spent his time botanizing and geologizing in the darksome interiors of 'Pots'. He wore a linen tunic and knickerbockers, and a veritable snickersnee of a knife stuck in his belt. Of course nobody dreamt of dressing for dinner at the Golden Lion, but I used to think it odd of 'the Pot-holer' to come to table straight out of the horrible pit with all the mire and clay yet on his garments. One evening the guest who was carving the joint of beef, complained that the knife was too blunt for the purpose. Whereupon 'the Pot-holer' whipped out his snickersnee and offered it to our acting host, who looked anything but grateful for this mode of solving the problem. 'But it's quite clean', 'the Pot-holer' urged, 'I only use it for cutting heather to fill my sleeping-bag!'

At the Game Cock at Austwick there was a select front door for the guests, and a veranda, up which climbed rambler-roses, and inside we had a private sitting-room, with a low ceiling, mullioned windows, and walls three feet thick, and a stone-flagged floor, altogether a room to make any American yearn to dig it up and replant it in the States. To get into the bedroom you pulled the latch and took a step downwards, the while you might note that the key of the door was big enough to brain a cat-burglar with at night. This was the best bedroom, and quite large, but once we had to wait a few days for it, and sleep in the room we termed 'the bunny-hole'. It was long and narrow, and I had to kneel on the floor to look out of the window, such as it was, and I felt like Alice in the White Rabbit's house. We paid four and six per day for board and lodging, which meant four enormous meals—with hot buttered tea-cakes for breakfast as well as for tea—served in our own sitting-room. That was in pre-War days, for after the War you

might pay almost the same sum for a lunch off rabbit-pie and rice-pudding. But by then we had given up inn-life, and always went to lodgings for our holidays. As far as our experience goes, the progress of civilization has not improved the fare at old country inns. The first time we lunched at Buckden—walking over from Littondale—we sat by ourselves in the parlour, and were regaled with hot Yorkshire pudding and gravy, and when our appetites were reduced to normal size, then appeared a joint of roast beef, followed by a Wensleydale cheese. The next time—three years ago—we were driven there in a motor. We sat in a new tea-room for trippers, and were served by a waiter in a dress suit, with the conventional napkin over his arm, who brought us soup with a French title and not much else to recommend it either in quality or flavour.

When all due praise is accorded to the fare set before us when we stayed at good inns like the Golden Lion and the Game Cock, I can still say that meals there were nothing to the teas we had year after year at farm-houses, or the outdoor lunches we ate together on lonely heights, if reckoned by the standard of pure enjoyment. On one of our first ventures in search of tea we went to 't'Top', a farm a few miles from Horton. Joseph Wright asked the good woman who came to the door if she ever made tea for strangers walking on the moors, and she told him she never did. 'Well then, Mrs. Lambert,' he said, 'don't you think you might begin now?' (All this was, of course, in the purest local dialect.) It ended in our having a lovely tea, with cakes, and pastry, and cream, in the farm kitchen, and ever afterwards we could depend on a welcome. Mrs. Lambert would even bring out a table and chairs, and give us our tea on the moorside. Once we took two friends there with us, and though we arrived unannounced, she gave us nine different sorts of cakes and bread. I think we loved best of all Mrs. Middleton's teas at Crummack, when we had spent all the early part of the day walking over the moors from Settle to Feizor, with a snack of lunch and a good rest at Feizor Nick, and then on again down into Wharfe, and up

Crummack Dale by a bridle track. About half-way up, the beck of the Dale makes a curve round a bank whereon a birch-tree grows. This spot we christened 'cool Siloam', and even after Joseph Wright lost his pipe in the stream, we never ceased to think it a perfect halting-place on a summer's day. The great feature of Mrs. Middleton's tea was the big jug of cream she gave us. One day when she had spread our tea before us, she said, 'Is there anything more I can give you?' and just for fun Joseph Wright replied, 'Well, I'm not sure whether we shall have enough cream'. The result was a second jorum of cream! Many a good tea have we had at the Lister Arms at Malham, after walking over the tops from Settle. In early days we used to walk back by Kirby Malham, making a full fifteen-mile round, but in later times we had to renounce this, and be driven in a motor. The walk from Settle to Malham past Stockdale farm was, I think, Joseph Wright's favourite tramp, and when in memory I wander again round Settle I come like a homing pigeon to 'our slab'. This was a big flat stone under a wall on the summit of the moor, just where the track began to wind down into Malham, and where Malham Tarn and the region round about first came into view. Guide-books say the spot is 1,550 feet above sea-level. Here we always sat to eat our picnic lunch of bread and butter and fruit, and Joseph Wright would have a long smoke. Our climbing was done, and there was no hurry, for we used to allow ourselves five or six hours for the seven miles to Malham village. We never cared for 'doing' the show places of the district. In the twenty-nine years that we knew Settle intimately, we only went to Malham Cove two or three times, when we had friends with us, and only once did we visit Gordale Scar. The guide-book says: 'Malham Cove and its surroundings comprise a beauty spot of rare and engaging charm.' Ruskin—the same authority affirms—wrote of it in *Prosperina*, and Charles Kingsley put it into his *Water Babies*; and various poets and writers, including Wordsworth, have sung the praises of Gordale Scar. Ingleton lost its charm for us when it took to vaunting its Scenery—

with a capital S—on posters which inform the tourist that all the beauties of Switzerland can be had in Ingleton for the sum of sixpence. 'An Association', so says the guide-book, has 'improved' the paths by the mountain stream, and 'made the climbs easier and safer', with the result that the waterfalls and rocks have an artificial air, as if they had been 'laid out' by a landscape gardener to court admiration on a bank holiday. They remind me of the Malvern Hills which have become so suburban since I was a girl. Now that easy paths for bath-chairs have been engineered in every direction, even the lambs frolic with a self-conscious deportment, as if they did it 'By Order' of the Town Council. Joseph Wright liked to preserve his independence of judgement wherever he went, so he tramped about his native dales at his own sweet will, and neglected popular 'beauty spots'. The *Yorkshire Post*,<sup>1</sup> in an obituary notice, wrote: 'For many years Dr. and Mrs. Wright had paid regular holiday visits to the Craven district of Yorkshire. There he was a familiar figure with his pipe and Scotch terrier, and was known to everybody simply as "The Professor".' The 'Scotch terrier' was certainly an object of interest, especially to children accustomed only to sheep-dogs. I remember a small boy in Horton shouting to his fellows to come and look at this strange kind of dog, and another child in Feizor asked his father, 'What's that?' as if our MacGregor were some odd animal from the Zoo.

Mr. Charles Wade, who owned a cottage in Austwick, where he and his family spent their summer holidays, recently wrote to me telling me his recollections of Joseph Wright at the Game Cock. They were discussing employment conditions together, and Joseph Wright related the following episode which happened when he was working at Stephen Wildman's mill. He had met with an accident to one of his fingers, which incapacitated him for some time. His master came to him, and the following dialogue ensued: 'Cheer up Joe. Tha'll sooin be better, but I see tha'rt bothered abaht summatt. Is it thi Muther

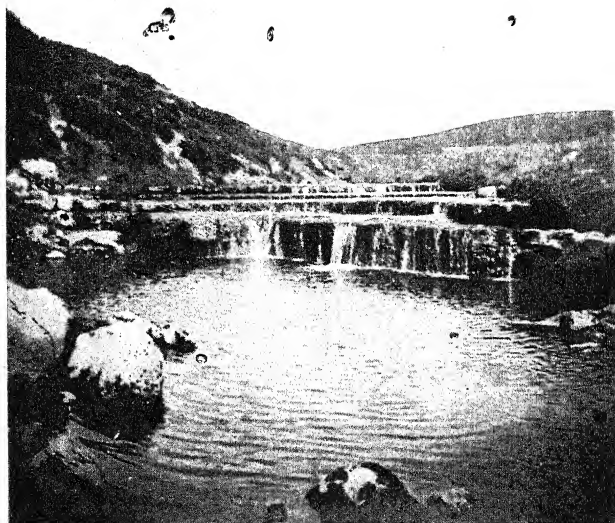
<sup>1</sup> February 28, 1930.

tha'rt worried abaht?' J. W. 'Aye.' 'Tha needn't fesh thisen onny more abaht her. I'll see at shoo's all right.' Mr. Wade goes on to say: 'This was quoted by Joseph Wright as an incident which led to his conviction that the human factor was the strongest one, and the one most likely to bring about happier relations in the domain of capital and labour.'

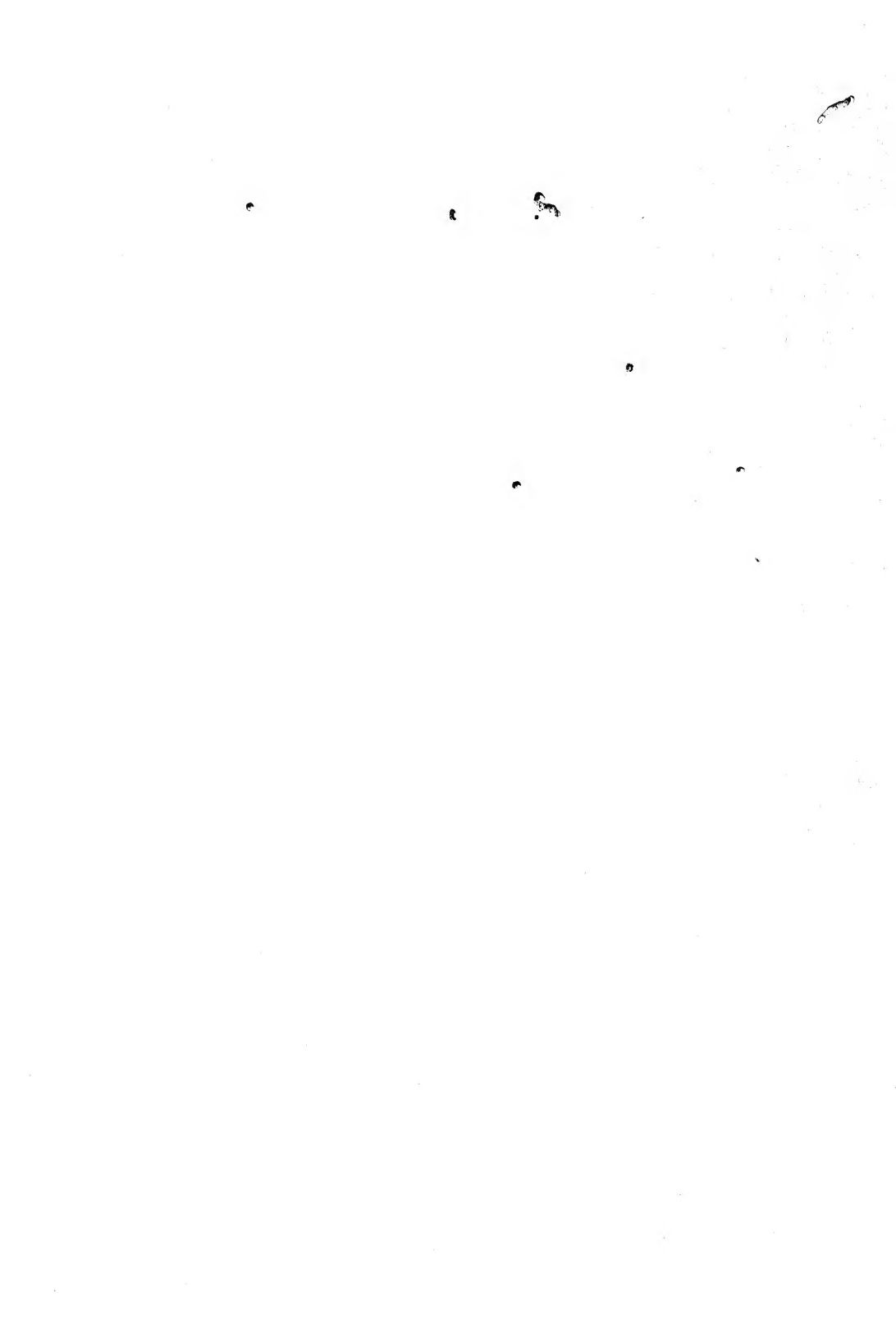
An old friend—Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds—who occasionally joined us in our walks at Settle, when he too was staying there, writes his reminiscences of Joseph Wright as follows:

Whether we met in Oxford or at Settle, where both of us often spent part of our summer holidays, our opening talks were generally about some new walks the Professor had tried over the moors or in the dales. And as an experienced traveller he never forgot to mention the opportunities for getting a good Yorkshire tea, and the degree of amiability to be met with in the various farms on the route. Our own professional work we rarely discussed, although I always saved up some questions on philology to ask him. But two things he could not resist: one was to point out the reduplication in the name *Ingfield* of a certain great house; and to laugh at the name of the principal street in Settle, *Duke Street*. 'There never was any duke in Settle', he would say, 'it must be *Deuk* Street, Duck Street.'

As to the military profession, he conceded it certain good points, and always agreed that the discipline which the Army had knocked into the German nation had done much to turn a very second-rate people, on the average, into almost a first-class one, and had made the ground easier for the teachers. The Germans, he said, respected authority, and there were such a small proportion of eminent Germans that these few stood out prominently, and as outstanding personalities were followed and obeyed. 'We have too many eminent men,' he said, 'they get in each other's way, are jealous of each other, and have their own separate cliques; and their combined influence is less than that of a smaller number of great men in Germany.' 'The Germans', he said on one occasion, 'have a dozen eminent men or so in each branch of learning and business, we have hundreds, almost thousands.' The one mistake that Germans make, he said, was 'to observe the dicta of some great man long after they have in the course of time ceased to apply, just as the



ON THE MOORS AND THE RIVER RIBBLE  
NEAR SETTLE



Chinese continued to follow the precepts of Confucius. 'Anyhow,' he continued, 'they are the best of my customers, they buy my books better than my fellow-countrymen do.'

The early specialization in German Universities he thought was a mistake, as only producing a class of well-instructed second-class men. But he greatly approved of the fashion in which professors were chosen in Germany: they had to be 'called', that is, they did not propose themselves for election, but were nominated by others. There was none of the undignified 'touting for votes by the applicant which goes on in England.

In general he thought that the English system of education gave the young a distaste for acquiring knowledge, and that it should be the first duty of a teacher to inspire a love of learning. That done, the learner had best be left to acquire it for himself, with such guidance as he may ask for. He found teaching women somewhat discouraging; when he looked up, he would seldom find any face turned towards him showing intelligent comprehension; they would all be looking down scribbling hard in note-books. 'And note-book-headed most of them are', he added.

No one however was more tolerant of ignorance in others, and there was never anything of a professorial manner about it. The children, as well as the grown-ups of my family loved him. With him survived the old-fashioned courtesy; elderly ladies—at any rate in Yorkshire—he invariably addressed as 'Madam', with bows at suitable moments, and they liked it. For the children his beginning was: 'John, my boy, have an apple', or something tasty that he had at hand; and he would tell them a story with a bit of Yorkshire dialect in it, with the result that they added many an ancient word to their vocabulary, which later on they used with pride. The 'Pro' as they called him, will long remain the memory of what a professor should be, a kindly not a terrifying personality, the picture of genial learning.

In the War years we went a couple of times to Minehead instead of taking the longer journey to Yorkshire. Minehead itself was dull, we seldom frequented the Promenade or the sea-front, it was too town-like and fashionable for us. Besides, we were apt to meet a fiery West Highlander, who cherished some racial feud between East and West, and said things to our friend MacGregor which no gentleman from Aberdeen could



tolerate for a moment, and we feared blood might be shed. The hills covered with heather and dwarf gorse gave us plenty of scope, though naturally they did not win our affections away from the Yorkshire moors. I remember best of all the walks over the heathery hill between Minehead and the village of Wootton Courtenay. We used to get lunch there, sitting out in a garden belonging to the people who kept the Post Office. The old woman who had charge of the domestic side of the establishment took Joseph Wright entirely under her wing. She seemed as if she could not do enough for him. She would say the chairs were hard, and fetch him a better one, or that the grass was damp, or the wind cold, and she would run out with a mat, or a rug, or both, and in the middle of her cooking she would reappear to ask him: 'Could you fancy fried kidney beans, if I were to do some for you?' Of course Joseph Wright gladdened her heart by a grateful acceptance of all her ministrations.

We had a new and amusing experience on the way to Minehead when we spent a few days at Weston-super-Mare to see two aged maiden aunts of mine. They could not take us into their house, and Weston was very full of visitors, so we contented ourselves with a boarding-house. It was before the rationing system was established, for though the food was extremely plain, it was abundant. The butter came to the table in pound pats, and the elderly helpers who brought in the dinner almost staggered under the weight of the vast fruit-pies in enamel pie-dishes. We all sat together round one big dining-table. If any one was late for breakfast the hostess had already poured out his or her cup of tea, and it was getting cold. We were a queer assortment of folk. There was the High Church curate from London, who was addressed as 'Father'; the gloomy Belgian refugee priest; the English clergyman with the stout wife who was discussed by the others in whispers, they were sure she was 'a German', it was no good her saying she was 'Dutch'; her daughter and her step-daughter; and the lady of a certain age with an auburn wig. The last-named guest was

always trying to drag up the level of conversation at meals. She had a friend called 'George' whom she quoted continually to show the kind of society in which she was accustomed to move. He was not a part of speech like Sairey Gamp's 'Mrs. Harris', for I actually saw him once, walking out with the lady. They had been one afternoon to see the caves at Cheddar. This gave a fine opening: 'My friend George—he was nineteenth wrangler at Cambridge—says that it takes a thousand years for a stalactite to grow one inch.' 'Umph!' murmured the Belgian refugee, being the speaker's nearest neighbour, and feeling some response was due from him. 'Maria', said the German lady to her step-daughter, 'have you got your cheese?' and then to the waiting-maid: 'Bring Miss Maria some cheese. She never eats meat.' 'Most vegetarians are cranks, and they are always rather scraggy, aren't they?' observed Joseph Wright, genially inattentive, and quite unaware that the lady next him was just such as he described. 'You are eating nothing, Father!' This in a tone of anxiety from our hostess. 'Fact is,' replied the curate, 'I ate too many jam-tarts at the picnic this afternoon'—this with as near an approach to a wink as befitted his cloth, directed towards the only young lady member of the party. Joseph Wright liked to get his money's worth, but he never liked to feel he was getting more than that. Before we left the boarding-house he said to the proprietress: 'You feed us too well Mrs. —, you can't make it pay at the price.' 'Oh, but, Professor', she replied, 'I *do* like to see people eat. If I could do just what I should like, I should keep a Zoo.'

Our acquaintance with Sidmouth in South Devon goes back twenty years, and we have walked together along every bit of the coast between Exmouth and Seaton. The red cliffs by the sea, and all the ridges between the Otter and the Sid, and the hills on the way to Honiton are to me now wrapt in memories of long spring days in the open air, when the lanes were bordered with primroses bigger than any we had ever seen before. One incident on our walks I must chronicle here, because it shows how Joseph Wright put his theories into

practice even on trivial occasions. He frequently said that the great value of possessing information lay in knowing when and where to produce it. 'The right thing at the right time', was a constant maxim of his. We were crossing a field between Sidmouth and Budleigh Salterton, making a short cut to avoid walking out fruitlessly to the end of Otterton Point, when we encountered a farmer. Seeing us approach, he set his back against the gate before us, and told us that this was not a public path. We argued that we had seen people going that way: 'Then', said the farmer, 'they were doing what you are doing now, trespassing.' There was nothing to be gained by scoffing, so we remained to pray. Joseph Wright talked crops and stock, and showed such masterly knowledge of the pros and cons of the locality from an agricultural point of view, that he quite won the farmer's heart, and after about half an hour of such discourse, the farmer of his own accord opened the gate and pointed out a still shorter cut down through his farmyard. 'That's my son down there', he told us, 'you just tell him I said you were to walk through, and you'll come to the bridge over the river on the other side of our place.'

On one of our Sidmouth tramps we departed from our rule of not 'doing' show places, and we went to see a Raleigh house, near Budleigh Salterton. We listened to the tale told by the girl who took our sixpences. I think she showed us a room where Sir Walter Raleigh smoked his first pipe in England. Joseph Wright was not seriously impressed, and when the girl pointed out a 'real old Elizabethan door', he interrupted with: 'Well, I don't know anything about "Elizabethan" doors, but I can tell you this much: *that* door was made since *I* was born.'

Before the War we had only been to Sidmouth occasionally at the New Year, it was in 1915 that we began going there in the spring. Till then we had regularly gone to Germany at Easter-time for three weeks, ever since the children had outgrown babyhood. Our last visit to Germany was in April 1914. My experience of foreign travel before I was engaged was limited to being one of a family party in a trip to Switzerland,

on two or three occasions. That meant staying at hotels frequented by English people, and seeing things and places recommended by Baedeker. When I went to Germany in 1897 with Joseph Wright, everything was different, and vastly more interesting. We paid visits to German friends, and were adopted into German family life; we went to hotels where we should find no English people and no English cooking; we stayed in University towns where Joseph Wright was well known personally and by repute, and we were welcomed on all sides. Now and again we were entertained at coffee-parties, or we had all-day outings with German friends. It all made a delightful background of foreign social life to the real joys of our foreign travel together, for as at home in England we found our chief pleasure in country walks by ourselves. Thus I came to know numbers of German philologists who had previously been only names to me, as authors of learned works to be studied, if not possessed; such scholars as Bülbring, Hoops, Kluge, Max Förster, and many others besides. German Professors are always ready to talk 'shop', even at a dinner-party, and Joseph Wright liked to hear and discuss all the latest German theories about English Philology, the newest developments in University teaching, and changes in the Professoriate. At a German dinner-party everybody leaves the table at the same time—at least, unless fashions have changed since the War. It was a surprise to me, at the first party I attended, to find I was expected to take my partner's arm again and be escorted back to the drawing-room. Then everybody shook hands with everybody else and said 'Gesegnete Mahlzeit' [= blessings on your meal!], after which the men withdrew to the adjoining study, and I was left to the nice easy chit-chat of the ladies, over modest glasses of Munich beer, whilst the men spent the rest of the evening up to midnight talking 'shop'.

We always travelled out via Harwich and the Hook of Holland. Joseph Wright was a good sailor, so he never hurried to his berth on the boat as I did, but liked to pace the deck for some time before retiring to bed. His honest look saved us

from being bothered by Custom-house officials, they accepted his word without delving into our luggage. On the journey home he would show them his cigars, which he kept at hand for the purpose. Once when an official came into the compartment to examine our 'hand-luggage' on the German border, Joseph Wright showed him a full bottle of Scotch whisky, and as a reward for honesty the official suggested that it was for 'consumption on the journey', and there was therefore nothing to pay! A German guard on an express train looks much too magnificent to accept a tip; however, when we travelled, the guard used to see sixpences in Joseph Wright's eye, and come and tell us the name of the next station, or if he wanted to show his command of the English language he might say: 'The customer will be coming.' When the train stopped at Neuss, near the frontier of Germany, Joseph Wright had his annual joke ready: 'A *noice* place this!' We always had difficulties about the open window if there were Germans in the same compartment. To sit in the corner facing the engine gives no right over the window in Germany. The native traveller appeals to the guard, the guard sides with his compatriot, and the English traveller is left to suffocate. On one of our journeys a wrathful lady declared that we were endangering the life of her husband who was suffering from a bad throat. By order of the guard we were hermetically sealed up with the gentleman's germs for the rest of the way, with the result that we were both quite ill for a few days with some throat affection of the nature of influenza.

Joseph Wright's old love for Heidelberg drew us there first and foremost each year. In 1897 Mr. Winter, senior, was still alive, and we stayed with him in his big house at Neuenheim for a few days before taking up hotel quarters near the Schloss. I could read German, but I had had no practice in conversation, and Mr. Winter took great pains to help me. If he walked out with us he talked all the time to me, and when we sat down to rest and admire the view, he would produce a book, and read German poetry at me, punctuated by the German for: 'Do you

understand? Do you follow me?' Joseph Wright seldom took the trouble to listen, he strode on in front, or sat serenely smoking. A 'Ja! Ja!', or 'Wunderschön!' [= wonderfully fine], 'Sehr interessant!' [= very interesting], or perhaps his favourite adjective 'Colossal!' flung over his shoulder sounded quite convincing, and required no mental effort on his part. I was truly grateful to Mr. Winter for his instruction, for most of the Germans I met were anxious above all things to practise their English on me, and as my German was rather lame, I fell an easy prey. They never talked English to Joseph Wright. One lady, leaping into a breach in my conversation, said: 'You can talk English to me. I write poetry in English, and I dream in English!' I could not honestly say I could write poetry in German, and if I dreamt in German I am sure it would have been a nightmare dream. I so hated genders. The thought of various types of plurals of nouns, and then the lining up of the correct forms of articles and adjectives would sometimes reduce me to a panic-stricken confusion, or sheer dumbness. The best plan was, I discovered, to hearken diligently to the 'company' talk of the lady on whom I was calling, and then reel it off like a gramophone record on the next one I met. In this way I became quite glib at saying how wonderfully beautiful was the cherry-blossom on the road to Handschuhsheim; how magnificent the green of the forest; how picturesque the antique ruins of the famous Castle of Heidelberg, always remembering that if I spoke of going to Freiburg, I must treat of its local charms in a minor key, using less rapturous epithets. As a matter of fact, apart from old associations and old friends, even Joseph Wright preferred Freiburg and the Black Forest to Heidelberg, but it would have been treason to say so.

Our first visit to Freiburg-in-Breisgau was in 1901 when we stayed at the Hotel Hohenzollern, on the outskirts of the town, kept by Frau Ganss, an elderly widow with very capable daughters. They became such good friends of ours that when we left they presented us with a book of views of the neighbourhood as a token of 'kind remembrance' of our 'stay in Freiburg,

April 1901'. It was a thoroughly German hotel, with a 'Stammtisch' [= reserved table] where prominent notabilities of the town sat and drank beer in the evenings; whilst we were eating for our supper an 'asparagus omelette' made specially for us by Frau Ganss. That 'Spargel-omelette' eaten in the restaurant of the Hohenzollern became enshrined in our memories as a sort of poetical dish, an accompaniment for nectar. I remember starting from the Hohenzollern the first time we walked through the Forest up to the Luisenhöhe. Frau Ganss sped us on our way with a message from herself to the Herr Wirth at the hotel on the top. Joseph Wright divined an old romance in the greeting we carried, and the friendly reception accorded to us then and since. It was during this our first visit to Freiburg that we went to the Old Theatre to hear *Lohengrin*. When I listen to the music of it on the wireless now, I still think of that wonderful evening, and see the swan come gliding across the back of the stage bringing the resplendent hero. The performance began at 6 p.m., and went on till 11 p.m. There was an interval of an hour in the middle, when the audience left their seats and congregated in a large restaurant in the building. We ate bread rolls split in two, with a slice of cold sausage in between, and we drank German beer. An amusing scene was enacted in front of our hotel before we started, one which Joseph Wright never forgot. I was looking out of the window of our bedroom, when I saw an old-fashioned cab draw up outside the hotel, cab and cabman the actual counterpart of the English variety. An extraordinarily stout gentleman in a big overcoat appeared, and proceeded to mount the step of the cab, and straightway got stuck in the doorway! He could move neither forwards nor backwards, so 'cabby' descended from his box, and setting his shoulder to the portly form of the old gentleman, he heaved him in like a bale of goods. And this, we were told, was no less a personage than the Secretary to the late Prince Bismarck! Anyhow, the cabman showed him no particular respect, and might have been singing to himself as he drove off the German equivalent to 'Once aboard the growler,

and the fare is mine', leaving it to the whilom Secretary to solve the problem of how to get out again. He was supposed to be going to hear the Opera, but we never saw him again. The only other time we went to the theatre in Germany was in 1914 when we saw *Faust* at the New Theatre in Freiburg, which has a revolving stage. I had never seen such life-like acting, and the whole thing was intensely impressive. We came back very late to our hotel in Güntherthal, to find a grand cold supper laid out for us in our own room, and we both feasted like school-children rounding off a day's holiday. Not long afterwards, when we were sitting on a pine-log in the Forest, a tall German with an overcoat and an umbrella came up to us, and looking round on the fallen trunks, he burst into a tirade against his native Freiburg for cutting down the Forest trees to pay for the colossal New Theatre. We did not tell him we had already patronized this wickedly expensive edifice. Joseph Wright's beard and spectacles often led the natives to see in him a fellow-countryman, and his perfect knowledge of their tongue gave credence to the supposition; but any stranger who saw in him a sympathetic audience, or adviser, never found himself mistaken. It was a confiding Englishman who espied us once in a railway carriage on the train from the Hook into Germany, and came and planted himself down in our compartment, and poured a handful of German coins into Joseph Wright's palm, saying: 'Do explain to me what all these coins mean. I don't know the worth of a single one of them.'

When Mary was our only child we never left her by herself, and in 1904 we began taking her with us to Germany at Easter. She proved a great addition, for her childish delight in everything was very refreshing, not only to us, but to our German friends as well, and she was at the same time as dependable as a grown-up travelling companion. She was never bored or weary. Even the dismal sheds through which one tramps in the chilly dawn, or late evening, between the train and the boat; or the tables of the customs-men radiated joy into Mary's soul. We carried her 'Pussie' secreted in the rugs, a bald and ragged



object with which she slept every night, and which proved a sure antidote to sea-sickness. When safely secured in our cabin for the night, 'Pussie' was unpacked, and then hidden away again in the morning before the stewardess came to call us. Not that Mary would mind if the stewardess did laugh to see a little girl of six having a monkey in her berth, but she might laugh at 'Pussie's' shabby fur and dilapidated limbs, and that would hurt the poor creature's feelings. The same careful ritual had to be observed in hotels, for fear of thoughtless chambermaids. She acted up to her principles, and though she noted foreign habits and customs with a critical eye, it was only we who heard her opinions on them. She did not wish to hurt the feelings of Germans by telling them, for instance, that pillar-boxes in the street should be painted red, not blue. Only once did she give me rather a shock, when she and I had been taking a turn round the Schloss Park, leaving Joseph Wright and our host sitting in front of mugs of beer. She ran on ahead of me back to their table crying excitedly: 'Dada, some people down there thought I was a little German girl, and Mother said she was glad I wasn't!' The mistake in nationality was due to her having two long plaits of fair hair and clear blue eyes. It was a perpetual astonishment to us to see how readily she picked up German words, and succeeded in making herself understood, even when alone with German children. Otto Winter had now succeeded his father in the big house at Neuenheim, and Mary played in the garden with his little boys. We went again to the Hohenzollern Hotel in Freiburg, where the 'Familie Ganss' in a body devoted themselves to Mary, and vied with each other in producing all kinds of Easter eggs for her. In 1905 we were all in Baden-Baden, where we stayed for a short time with the late Professor Lenz, whom Joseph Wright had known as a student in Heidelberg. I have a 'Bierkarte' signed by him and his wife, and ending up with Mary's signature, commemorating a day in the Murgthal; and another signed by the Otto Winters telling of a country outing we had with them when they came over from Heidelberg to join us in

Baden-Baden. The last time we had Mary with us in Germany was in 1908, when, after leaving Heidelberg, we spent the remainder of our holiday at Würzburg. It was a specially happy time, there were plenty of nice walks in the neighbourhood, and Mary found constant pleasure in seeing so many soldiers about the town, Würzburg being a military centre. I wrote in a letter to my sister:

*Hotel Schwan, Würzburg. April 29, 1908.*

... There are about 3,000 soldiers in barracks in Würzburg. Mary finds them ever exciting. This is certainly the most interesting German town I ever saw . . . the narrow streets overhung with high houses, and the numberless churches full of carvings and paintings, and the old gateways, and figures on the houses are most picturesque. English people do not come here, so nobody caters for tourists, and the shops are simply German. . . . We are extremely comfortable in this hotel—very German, but we prefer that. We pay 16 marks per day for the three of us. . . . We have a radiator and electric light in our room, so it is very comfortable. The chambermaid is surprised that we keep our windows open. The people here are more than usually given to heat and permanently closed double windows. I was told that a doctor in Berlin was making a fortune by simply persuading people to take cold baths and sleep with their windows open. It is a pity that more German doctors do not try this easy road to fortune.

Mary, though only ten, wrote quite descriptive letters to her aunts:

*25th April, 1908.*

... This town is Roman Catholic. There are quantities of churches, so when you go along the street nearly every other building is a church. We have already been into seven of these churches, they are most of them very grand, with a great many altars in them. Near the churches are generally shops where you can buy wax candles, because the people think that if they buy a candle and put it in the church before an altar, while it

is burning St. Mary is praying for them. We went to a place up the hill where there is a church, on the way to this church are little houses in which are the statidns of the cross. In the church are a lot of wax things. When a person has broken her leg or arm or head and she gets better then she goes to a shop and buys a leg or arm or head (whichever she had broken) and puts it in the church. Some people put pictures in the church of their accident. . . .

*April 26th.*

The market is very big. They seem to sell chiefly onions, oranges, and flowers. It is generally old women who sit in sort of boxes that sell the things. There is no English Church here so we proposed to go to the Cathedral. We had been told that there was a sermon at nearly every service. So we went to church but to our great dissapointment we found that the priest read prayers to himself while the people followed in their books. As nothing could be heard he often rang a bell to tell the people where he had got to. . . . Today all the children who had been confirmed last Sunday went to their first Communion service today. They wear new white dresses, new pocket-hankerchiefs, white stockings, new boots, and no hat. They have their hair tied with white ribbons and wear wreaths on their heads. After the service they receive an orange which they carry on the hankerchiefs. When they go to be confirmed they have large candles decorated with coloured paper. They also take them to the Communion services. The children wear the white dresses the whole day. There are a great many soldiers here, and when an officer goes by if he meets a soldier I always like to see them salute. But generally you see some soldiers but no officer, and when you see an officer there are not always soldiers to salute..

The crowning joy was when one day Mary sat beside an officer in the tram. She took the salutes herself, like Royalty at a 'march past'. Then there was the exciting spectacle of the military service in the Cathedral, which she described in a later letter:

*29th of April, 1908.*

On Monday we heard some music and when we looked out we saw about 2,000 soldiers going over the bridge. Behind came some rather grander soldiers with black plumes on their helmets. About half an hour later we went out and seeing some people outside the Cathedral we thought perhaps the soldiers were in church as it was the king's birthday. So we went in and found all the soldiers standing in the isles. At the East End were four priests all reading out of the same book. They had all got gold cloaks on and one priest had his cloak down to the ground. They kept moving about all the time under the lighted candles. They had boys in white surplices to wait on them. The priests swung censers some part of the time till the East End was full of smoke. One priest came and swung incense into the church. At certain times near the end they beat the drum and then the soldiers bowed and crossed themselves. We remained in the church till the end and saw them go out. First went the soldiers with the black plumes then the ordinary soldiers and last of all some tall soldiers with bright red plumes on their helmets. There was a great crowd in the street to watch the soldiers come out. Yesterday morning we went to the king's palace. The king is in a Lunatic Asylum and the Prince Regent thinks it too dull and so he does not live here. There are over 300 rooms and 25 kitchens. We only saw the principal rooms. There were a great many people looking round. You have to have a guide. We went through about 34 rooms. In the king's playroom the walls are silver painted green. . . .

We returned to Oxford a few days later ; our last journey with Mary as a travelling companion.

In 1909 and onwards, after the usual visit to the Winters in Heidelberg, we spent the remainder of our three weeks at Freiburg. We forsook the Hohenzollern, and chose the Kyburg, a more isolated hotel—but also purely German—in Günthersthal, a lovely valley just outside the town, where the Black

Forest came down to the very door. At Easter the hotel was rather empty, but it was a very popular German resort in the summer, and even in April on a fine day, the 'Bier-garten' would be full of people in the afternoon, drinking coffee and eating chunks of 'Kuchen'. Herr Trescher, the landlord, and his wife saw to it that we had everything of the best. Joseph Wright had a slight attack of gout there one year, and Frau Trescher provided him with 'Pfannkuchen' [= pancakes] and other delicacies in place of the meat he was not supposed to touch. The attention confirmed his theory that the first object of a German hotel proprietor is how to make the guest comfortable; whereas in England this is a secondary consideration, the primary one being how to make the guest pay the maximum for what he receives.

If thoughts could be airships, and carry us off on pleasure trips to familiar spots, Joseph Wright and I would often have gone back to Günthersthal in April, and again wandered up through the Forest, when the sun was shining between the young beech leaves lighting up the dark firs, when the finches were chirping and the woodruff at our feet was just ready to be picked for the 'Maibowle'; on and up to the steep 'zick-zack' path at the top where the young larches grew. This was our favourite walk up to Louisenhöhe, where we used to get a morning cup of coffee, and sit to rest, looking across to the distant heights of the Vosges.

The last time we were in Germany was in 1914, and we followed our customary routine, Heidelberg first, and then Günthersthal. Joseph Wright was certainly more impressed by the signs of wealth than he had been before, though he had each year noticed a gradual change in Germany, as at home in England. He noted the increasing number of ostentatious villas on the outskirts of Freiburg; but he was more especially struck by the change of tone in academic circles. Talk turned more on 'Collegengeld' and income, and less on Philology and teaching. Life in a Professor's house was less simple than of yore. Where in olden days we were invited to supper and found

the table spread with one or two large platters of the multifarious and elegant sandwiches and cold 'Delikatessen' which only a German housewife knows how to prepare, now we were given a costly dinner of several courses, graced with a variety of wines. We counted seven different wine-glasses in front of each guest on one of these festive occasions. We met with just as hearty a welcome as ever from our friends, and nowhere did we see any signs of unrest, or of approaching hostility in the general public. The only people who appeared to dislike the sight of us were the members of a military family at the Kyburg Hotel. A widow lady and her daughter were staying there, and every evening a couple of young lieutenants came in to supper with them. The ladies were tall and of military bearing, and the young men were just like the self-conscious and haughty 'Leutnants' so frequently the subject of jokes in the German *Punch*. The ladies gave us the barest nod when we saw them come in to breakfast; and the young men, when they appeared at supper, clicked their heels and bowed from the waist like wooden soldiers stiff in the joints, with a look at us which made me say to Joseph Wright more than once, that they were thirsting for our blood. After supper I used to leave Joseph Wright to his pipe and a chat with Herr Trescher, and repair to the Library upstairs to regale myself with a book in ten volumes called *Kerlchen*. It began with 'Kerlchen' in her cradle, and presumably followed her to the grave. She and her family lived exactly on the lines laid down by the Exercises in every orthodox German Grammar. She had brothers and sisters, her father wrote with a pen, and her grandfather walked with a walking-stick; there were tables and chairs inside the house, and the peasants outside had sheep and oxen. It was a most engaging book for any one wanting a vocabulary for family life in Germany. I read it steadily year after year, and had reached the middle of the sixth volume. I was just learning how to get engaged to be married in the proper sentimental fashion when our visit came to an end, and then the War came, so now I shall never complete the simple history of 'Kerlchen'. That last year,

1914, my interest in the book was enhanced by the dramatic performances given me by the military family. If they finished supper first, and I found them already occupying the Library, they at once formed four and retreated at the double. If I was there first, and they came in to find me in occupation, it was a case of right about turn, and a quick march back down the corridor. It gratified me intensely thus to rout the German army by sitting down to read to myself a harmless book. The elderly lady and her daughter from Essen, who contemplated building a villa in Günthersthal, courted our society; and the chambermaid, whom we named 'Mary Jane', wanted to come back to England to wait on us, and I had some ado to dissuade her from the project. When we left, everybody except the military folk clustered round with a chorus of 'Auf Wiedersehen' [= *au revoir*]; Frau Trescher pressed into my hand a basket of fruit and biscuits for the journey; and the last we saw of the Kyburg company was 'Mary Jane' waving a duster from our bedroom window. For a year or two after the War Joseph Wright used to say he would feel uncomfortable were he to meet his former friends in Germany, for he would not know what their attitude of mind towards him as an Englishman might be, but later, I feel sure he would have gone back to Germany, if his state of health had not by then made it impossible for him to travel so far.

#### V. RETIREMENT

It now remains for me to chronicle the last five years of Joseph Wright's life. At the end of 1924 he resigned his chair at Oxford, at the age of sixty-nine. His reason for so doing he gives in the following letter to his friend Mr. Charles Wade of Bradford:

*Thackley, 119, Banbury Road, Oxford. February 9, 1925.*

MY DEAR MR. WADE,

Many thanks for your kind letter which gave both of us great gratification.

I have not resigned my Professorship because I was worn out, but because I was always determined never to be described here as 'Poor Old Wright', while I was still in harness, at any rate. So far as I know I am mentally as vigorous as ever I was, and can still work 50 or 60 hours a week without getting the least bit tired; in fact with the help of my wife in the collecting of material, I have written and published three substantial books—philological grammars—since coming back from our holidays in September 1922, and I am now busy seeing another book through the press.

Now that I shall be able to devote myself entirely to my own private work it is my intention to write a series of historical and philological grammars of various languages to serve as text-books for the younger generation of University students. I have already written and published quite a number of such grammars, but in my opinion a great many more require to be written.

It was very kind of you to draw my attention to the article in the Yorkshire Observer about my past work, I have had a copy of the paper sent to me. I do not know who wrote the article, but it is fairly accurate, and as that article interested Mr. Baldwin so much, I am sending you herewith a copy of the Evening News which contains a more authentic account of my early years, and if you think that it also will interest him, please send it on to him, *but not otherwise*.

We often think of the pleasant hours we spent with you and your family at Austwick. We always walk over there once or twice when we stay at Settle in the summer. Since I underwent an operation in 1920 for what is popularly called the short circuit it is necessary for me to be always within easy reach of doctors, as I am liable from time to time to severe hemorrhage which requires immediate medical attention. A case in point happened to me at the beginning of last month when we had gone to Weston-super-Mare for a fortnight. I seemed to be as well and as strong as ever, but I suddenly had a bad hemorrhage and had to be rushed off in an ambulance to a nursing home.

We warmly appreciate your great kindness in regard to your



cottage at Austwick, but under the circumstances you will see how necessary it is for us to stay at a place like Settle where a doctor can be had immediately if required. If ever you are at Austwick from about the middle of August to the middle of September and will let us know we shall be delighted to come over to see you there or for you and your family to come to see us at Settle.

With our kindest regards to all of you,

Yours sincerely,

J. WRIGHT.

When the news of the retirement became publicly known, it was, as usual on the appearance of any item of information relating to Joseph Wright, the occasion of a fresh outburst of admiration, especially in Yorkshire, where local patriotism lent thereto a note of paternal pride. Newspapers vied with one another in producing sensational headlines, such as: 'Mill Boy to Professor'; 'Romance of Self-taught Mill Boy'; 'Professor never at School'; and the characteristically American: 'Wright quits Oxford Post. Rose From Mill Boy to Chair of Philology by Own Efforts.' Following a heading of this kind would be a short biographical sketch. A reader of the *Evening News* wrote to the editor of that paper: 'Sir, I should like to thank The Evening News for publishing the splendid account of the career of Dr. Joseph Wright, the distinguished Oxford Professor who began as a donkey-boy, and rose entirely through his own efforts. It would be a good thing if every Labour Exchange were to paste a copy on its notice-board!'<sup>1</sup> Editors wrote to ask for first-hand material, and journalists called to beg for interviews. The Editor of the *Leeds Mercury* wrote:

28th January, 1925.

The news of your retirement has created much interest among our readers, who see in your career another example of how determination may enable ambitious boys to rise.

I should be very grateful indeed if you would write for the

<sup>1</sup> *Evening News*, Feb. 4, 1925.

Mercury—which I think I may claim is *the* morning paper of work-a-day Yorkshire—a little article impressing upon the new generation the magnificent opportunities it has for studying by means of night classes, and so forth. I am sure that a message from you on those lines would have an excellent effect in the mill districts.

A paragraph in the same newspaper, after describing Joseph Wright as 'Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, and the author of a monumental Dialect Dictionary', adds: 'To us in Yorkshire, however, he is more than that.' An Aberdeen<sup>1</sup> newspaper adds to its biographical notice an amusing personal description, when it speaks of him as 'a gentle, bearded, Yorkshire giant'. Mr. Charles Wade wrote: 'There is keen and most friendly interest manifested by all classes in the story which appeals to all Yorkshiremen. . . . At this point I was interrupted to speak by telephone to a representative of the Bradford Daily Telegraph. He referred to the Yorkshire Post of this date, and was eager to learn more of the subject. It is evidently the topic of the hour.' The *Bradford Daily Telegraph* reported: 'Much interest was aroused locally by our announcement yesterday that Dr. Joseph Wright having reached his 70th year, was about to retire from the chair of Comparative Philology at Oxford. At the Shipley Council meeting last night the chairman, Mr. F. Fearnley Rhodes, and other members, expressed the pride which Shipley took in the achievements of a one-time resident in Windhill, and it was decided to send a suitably-worded resolution to Dr. Wright.'<sup>2</sup> A further testimony to his fame in the district is contained in the following letter from a former Elementary Schoolmistress—quite unknown to us—in which she also encloses a poem of her own in praise of the village of Thackley:

*Thackley. January 29th, 1925.*

I feel I would like to write a few lines to say how proud so many of us at 'Thackley' are of you.

<sup>1</sup> *Aberdeen Evening Express*, Jan. 28, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 28, 1925.

Before I was married I have often heard the Windhill schoolmaster use your name to my class, as an incentive to great things, and have seen the boys' eyes sparkle at the thought of what a boy from Windhill could do. . . .

Hoping that you will not think me presumptuous,

I remain, yours respectfully,

BERTHA PHEASEY.

Margate suddenly remembered that once upon a time Joseph Wright had taught in a school there. Indeed, the heading of the newspaper paragraph would almost imply that Margate credited itself with being the jumping-off place whence the final height was reached: 'A distinguished Career. From Margate School to University Professorship. It is interesting to know that Dr. Joseph Wright . . . had association with Margate during his brilliant upward climb to the highest honours', &c.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly—because it came from such a far-off country—appeared an interesting article reminiscent of the beginnings of the Dialect Dictionary, written by an early recruit enrolled among the 'correspondents' to the Dictionary, who went out to Tasmania from Bradford in 1907. Joseph Wright had been giving a lecture at the Mechanics' Institute in Bradford, and had spoken to the writer, Mr. Æthelbert Binns, afterwards, and secured his services as a volunteer. Mr. Binns writes:

In the compilation of Dr. Wright's monumental English Dialect Dictionary I had some little share, many hundreds of the '2,000,000 slips' being supplied by me, along with other enthusiastic helpers in various parts of the British Isles. In the honors and degrees attached to his name, readers of 'The News' will, I think, agree that there should also be a prefix, and the professor should be known as Dauntless Dr. Joseph Wright, though to his fellow villagers he is just lovingly and familiarly known as 'Jooah Wreeght', a West Riding pronunciation of his name. . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Isle of Thanet Gazette*, Feb. 7, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> *The News*, Hobart, June 13, 1925.

Amongst numerous private letters was one from Sir James Roberts, a fellow Yorkshireman, who from small beginnings rose to be the owner of Saltaire Mills:

*Newland Park, Chalfont St. Giles. 30th Jan. 1925.*

Well my dear boy, you have fought a good fight, and won a great victory, to a brother Yorkshireman such a record is an invigoration. . . . May the afternoon of your life be as charming as your manhood has been successful. We hope you have by now completely recovered from your recent setback, and when you have entered into the leisure you have so well earned, come on and let us smoke the pipe or cigar of peace under our cherry-trees, and fight our battles over again, if this occupation give us pleasure. . . .

Various old pupils wrote expressing praise and gratitude. One of them, Professor Tolkien, wrote from Leeds:

*Jan. 26, 1925.* In the first place I hope that you are not retiring now because of renewed or increased ill-health, but only to enjoy a very long period of well-earned rest and happiness. I hope I may send you my very best wishes, to yourself and to Mrs. Wright, as a grateful disciple (it was your works, that came into my hands by chance as a schoolboy, that first revealed to me the philology I love) to whom you have shown since so many kindnesses.

In May of this same year the title of Professor Emeritus was conferred on Joseph Wright by a Decree in Convocation. The Dean of Christ Church in submitting the Decree said of him: 'He was the friend of everybody in Oxford. It was always an inspiration to meet him, and get his ready smile. He had been a professor of whom any university might be proud. His work was not confined to the lecture room, for in that monumental work, the English Dialect Dictionary, he had laid all students of English under a lasting obligation.'<sup>1</sup>

Amongst all the tokens of recognition bestowed on Joseph

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Oxford Chronicle*, May 8, 1925.

Wright at this time, none gave him greater pleasure and satisfaction than the announcement that his friends and colleagues in Germany were preparing a 'Festschrift' for his birthday in October. The fact of its coming comparatively soon after the War, and that the idea had arisen in Germany, without any suggestion of English co-operation, made it doubly welcome. It was deeply gratifying to him thus to realize that no political feeling had broken the alliance between him and his brother philologists in a country to which he owed so much. Professor Hoops<sup>1</sup> wrote to me:

*Heidelberg. 23rd June, 1925.*

You have heard from Prof. Fiedler that I intend to dedicate the first number of the sixtieth volume of my 'Englische Studien' as a 'Festschrift' to your husband on his seventieth birthday. My suggestion has met with warm approval from many sides, and I was glad to see from the letters received how much your husband is liked among the colleagues in German universities. . . .

He went on to say: 'I wish to open the volume with a sketch of Prof. Wright's life and literary activity', and for this he begged me to supply him with further details to add to his 'rather scant' material. The volume is bound in red, with Joseph Wright's name in gilt letters on the outside. The dedication runs as follows: 'Dem vielseitigen Gelehrten und trefflichen Menschen, dem Mittler englischer und deutscher Sprachwissenschaft, zu seinem 70 Geburtstag am 31 Oktober 1925 gewidmet von Mitforschern in Deutschland, Österreich, und der Schweiz.' The substance of this dedication is expanded in the first paragraph of the biographical sketch, which I here translate: 'Among all living English philologists, none has developed such comprehensive and many-sided literary activity, and none has been so closely allied to German scholarship as Professor Wright of Oxford. He was a student at a German University, he took his Degree in Germany, and his work bears

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English Philology at Heidelberg.

the stamp of German scientific methods. In his academic position, as the representative of Comparative Philology, he has also by his numerous written works done great service for English Philology. In consideration of this, a number of his fellow-workers and friends in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland have combined together thus with Part I of Volume VI of *Englische Studien* to lay upon the birthday table of this renowned scholar and splendid man a nosegay of learned essays as a festival gift.' After giving an account of his career and literary works, the article gives the author's summing-up of Joseph Wright's character and personality: 'Wright is a "matter-of-fact man" in the best sense of the word, a characteristic admirably matched by the strong heroic figure of this burly Yorkshireman. . . . With all his successes, Joseph Wright has never become a prey to vanity, but has remained the same simple, straight-forward man, never ashamed of his lowly origin, but ready and willing to tell of the privations of his youth, and of his gradual rise. He is of an open, upright character, hearty, cheerful, humorous, amiable, above all energetic. His unexampled vigour and creative power is indeed the most striking trait of his character. It is to this in combination with his natural gifts and practical mind, that we owe the great range and the originality of his life's work as a scholar.' Finally, the contributors to the *Festschrift* express the hope that Joseph Wright may yet live many years to accomplish successfully the further work he has at heart. 'They wish further, that the festival gift which they here present to him may help towards the renewal of good relationship between English and German studies, and to the closer knitting together of the ties of fellowship in learning between civilized nationalities.' A student recalling the occasion of the Sunday tea, when there was a real birthday cake from Yorkshire for Joseph Wright's 70th birthday, wrote: 'He was so pleased with the wonderful *Festschrift*. It was a pity the German professors who had planned it could not see the pleasure they had given.'

He did, I believe, write letters of thanks to all the contribu-

tors. Professor Holthausen has kindly preserved the one received by him:

119 *Banbury Road, Oxford. Nov. 6, 1925.*

I feel highly honoured by the Festschrift which you and others have brought out in celebration of my 70th birthday, and I shall always treasure it as one of my most precious possessions. I wish to thank you most heartily for your share in presenting me with such a token of kind and friendly feeling, which I appreciate far more warmly than any words of mine can express.

I am delighted to hear that your Frisian Dictionary is already being printed. It will be a most useful piece of work both to students and Scholars. You are acting wisely to keep in touch with the younger generation.

With our kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

J. WRIGHT.

Together with the Festschrift came numerous letters of personal greeting from Germany. Professor Hoops wrote:

*Heidelberg. 28th October, 1925.*

The plan to dedicate a 'Festschrift' to you on your seventieth birthday was suggested by the feelings of a friendship that has lasted for nearly thirty years, and that I trust will last till death. The suggestion was hailed by the approval of numerous colleagues in Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Switzerland who revere in you the man of stalwart and lovable character, the scholar of wide knowledge and astounding productivity, and the mediator between German and English scholarship. In presenting the accompanying volume to you it is my cordial wish that you may long be preserved in your old strength and vitality to your wife, your friends, and to scholarship.

With affectionate greetings, in which my wife heartily joins me,

Ever yours faithfully,

JOHANNES HOOPS.

I can only give a small selection of extracts from these letters,

but I do this much, as a proof that the birthday gift was no empty and formal mark of honour:

[From Professor Brie.] • *Freiburg-i-B. October 29, 1925.*

• My best wishes for the day and the coming years! I hope that they will find you in your old health and your old good spirits. . . . I have not forgotten how friendly you received me in your nice Oxford home. I have always admired the interest you take in young scholars, and your way to encourage them.

Many scholars in various countries will be thinking of you today. There will be few linguists who are not obliged in one way or other to the work of your life. Nearly every year has seen a new publication by you. . . . In Germany too the students of English Philology have been trained by your grammars. . . .

[From Professor Keller—translated.] *Münster. 30.10.25.*  
LIEBER HOCHVEREHRTER HERR COLLEGE!

Among those who will to-morrow offer you their good wishes on your 70th birthday I should not like to be absent, for no one of your German colleagues has greater cause for expressing to you his grateful reverence than I, who only a few weeks ago was allowed the pleasure of your kindly hospitality. I still look back with much gratitude to that exhilarating time, and the visit to your beautiful home with its harmonious scholarly atmosphere. It was from that moment onwards that I felt really happy in England. During the following three weeks I went on busily working at the British Museum. . . . And over and over again I convinced myself of the correctness of your observations on points which I had previously not grasped. What you said about Ælfric's careful punctuation proves exactly right. . . . Now I am back again at home. . . . To-night my wife and I are going to the Münster Rathskeller with the sole object of drinking a glass of brown Munich beer to the health of the revered Professor Wright, who will to-morrow be 70 years old. May he yet for a very long time remain as young and vigorous, and as valiant a worker as he is now. . . .



[From Professor Wolff—translated.] *Hamburg. Nov. 3, 1925.*

Please forgive the lateness of the good wishes on your 70th birthday, to which in the name of the English Seminar I desire to give personal expression in this letter. Together with all English philologists we have at this time warm-heartedly and gratefully thought of what you have given to us in a life full of manifold and fruitful work. I may perhaps be allowed to add that our veneration is not only for the scholar who in the investigation of the English Language has won for himself imperishable honour, but also for the true Englishman, who cannot but be specially dear to every German, who in appreciative co-operation for the promotion of German and English Kultur performs one of the noblest tasks. . . .

[From Professor Karl Brunner.] *Innsbruck. Nov. 16, 1925.*

DEAR PROFESSOR,

I have to thank you for your very kind letter of Nov. 6. It seemed a matter of course that we German Anglisten brought out the small present of a Festgabe for your Birthday for we all owe you so very much. I personally was extremely pleased to contribute for I shall always remember the kind help I enjoyed from you when I came to your house as a young student 17 years ago. Besides, every German student and scholar finds so genuine hospitality at Thackley whenever he happens to come to Oxford. Only this summer you were kind enough to see a student of mine, a little nun, and to talk with her on her native country which you know so well. . . .

[From Professor Spies.] *Greifswald. January 27, 1926.*

. . . I hope you will even now accept my heartiest congratulations and best wishes for your further life. . . . Permit me to add that all my Greifswald pupils joined me in these wishes when I expressed them in my lecture of November 2nd last, referring to the 31st of October. . . .

The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford (Dr. Joseph Wells), in a letter of thanks for a copy of the biographical article in the

Festschrift, wrote (Dec. 11, 1925): 'I am very glad to have it, both for its own sake and as a small proof of the growth once more of international amenities. I congratulate you on the honour shown you, and I have to thank you on winning this distinction as a Professor of Oxford. . . .'

In March 1926, Joseph Wright felt it incumbent on him to relinquish still further his University duties, and he retired from the Secretaryship to the Curators of the Taylor Institution, a post he had held for over twenty years.

'During his tenure of that office he has done so much to promote the study of modern languages at the University, that his colleagues, old pupils and friends desire to commemorate in some permanent form his long and devoted work in Oxford, as well as his eminent services to the study of the English language and its Dialects.' It was finally decided that 'the best way of achieving both ends would be to raise by subscription a sufficient fund to have his portrait painted, and that the portrait could most appropriately be placed in the institution with which he had been so long and so usefully connected'. (I quote from the circular which was sent out inviting subscriptions with this end in view.) The Dean of Christ Church, and the then Warden of Wadham—the late Dr. Joseph Wells—were selected to appoint the artist. They agreed that 'only a Yorkshireman' could paint Joseph Wright's portrait, and the chosen artist was Mr. Ernest Moore. He and his wife were our guests for ten days in August 1926. Mr. Moore did not inflict many sittings on Joseph Wright, but he was studying his subject intently the whole time in order that he might make his picture a true representation of the man painted, and not a more or less faithful reproduction mainly designed to exhibit the artist's technique. He succeeded in giving us a real likeness as well as a real picture. The following are a few reminiscences connected with the painting of the portrait which Mr. Moore recently sent me:

. . . When I accompanied Dr. Wells to Thackley to be introduced to Professor Wright, to make arrangements for the paint-

ing of his portrait I felt quite nervous, but I had not been in his presence more than three seconds when I felt quite at my ease. The Professor was evidently aware that I was a fellow Yorkshireman, as he welcomed me in good old Doric, with outstretched hand, and his genial smile. . . . As far as I remember, the Professor gave me seven sittings, each of an hour, or an hour and a half duration. In order to make the sittings as comfortable as possible, I suggested that he should smoke, but the Professor declined: 'Nay, lad, it might interfere wi thi work. Go on! I'll tak a whiff or two when we rest.' This being but one example of his kind thoughtfulness and desire to assist me all he could. His head was a magnificent one to paint, being built up in broad masses, and during the sittings I was constantly reminded of his likeness, in this respect, to the late Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, whose portrait I had painted in Washington, D.C., some fifteen years before. The hands too, were beautifully modelled, perhaps better described by the word 'chiselled'. One could feel the construction of the bone under the surface of the smooth and delicate skin, which was, for a man of his years, remarkably free from wrinkles. During the sittings, and in our frequent walks abroad, we discussed the dialects of Yorkshire, and I felt very proud when he told me he would have been delighted to have had me as a correspondent during the time he was compiling his English Dialect Dictionary, a copy of which he subsequently gave me, and which is now one of my treasured possessions. . . .

The portrait was presented to the University on behalf of the subscribers by Dr. Wells on November 6 at the Taylor Institution, and was received by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the University. Dr. Wells said in his speech at the opening of the proceedings that 'The giving of the portrait had been a work of love by the subscribers', and he drew special attention to the fact that 'Among those who had subscribed were nearly 140 working men from Professor Wright's own neighbourhood'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Oxford Times*, Nov. 12, 1926.

A list of the subscribers was given to Joseph Wright, ending with the nameless company of '137 Yorkshire Working Men'. This token of remembrance which Dr. Wells called 'one of the most touching things in the whole business', was naturally most deeply appreciated by Joseph Wright himself.

A generous supply of copies of a collotype reproduction of the picture was bestowed on us, rolled on cardboard ready for posting, and Joseph Wright was very happy to be able to send these not only to distant friends, but also to various schools and Universities at home and abroad, where they were enthusiastically welcomed. Leeds University affixed a tablet to the framed portrait giving some biographical notes; schoolmasters wrote that it should hang where it would serve as an inspiration to youth; and in the Council School in the village of Thackley it was 'unveiled' with ceremonial speeches. The late Head Master of this school—Mr. Titus Barraclough—is reported to have said that it was the successful progress of Joseph Wright that spurred him onwards, when in despair of becoming anything more than a pupil-teacher. There was a reality about all these expressions of admiration which showed that the force of Joseph Wright's character was genuinely felt by all kinds of people, young and old, and, moreover, that the artist had reflected it on his canvas. A private letter written by the father of a former Oxford pupil said: 'Your portrait adorns my office here, and you may like to know that not a day passes but I look at it and feel cheered as I contemplate its noble serenity. In the rough and tumble of affairs it means a good deal to me, for I read into it many a lesson of endurance and calm philosophy.' An even more striking example of veneration for a hero was told me by an American Professor, once a pupil of my own, Mr. Edgar Taylor. He writes to me:

*St. Louis. Missouri. January 9, 1931.*

You refer in your letter to a foreign pupil of mine, who took off his hat to the picture. The man who did this was not a pupil

of mine, but an assistant professor at Washington University. . . . He is a Bohemian, and was born, I believe, in a little village outside of Prague. . . . He is one of the finest scholars on the English faculty at the University, and gives courses not only in literature, but in language. His course in Chaucer is most popular, and he has done a great deal out here in the Middle West to arouse interest in language. His interest in language, of course, accounts for his admiration for the Professor. The little story you remember is true. As he saw from the hall the Professor's picture hanging over my desk, he raised his hat and bowed. He had never seen the Professor, nor his picture, but he had heard me speak about him so often, that he knew in a moment who he was. Quite often when he comes over to see me he will stand in front of the picture and look at it. As a bit of news, which indirectly fits in this story, I want to tell you that we now have a little son. He is three months old. . . . On the Sunday after Christmas, the baby was baptized in the Cathedral here by the Bishop of Missouri. Professor — was the godfather. After we returned from the Cathedral, his godfather carried him up to the portrait, and in an amusing way, told him what a great man the Professor was, saying that if he was a good boy, he would some day be as fine a man as the Professor. . . .

Mr. Taylor goes on to record his own reminiscences of Joseph Wright in Oxford, and in particular of an occasion when he took us both in his car to spend the day with him and Mrs. Taylor in their country lodgings about twenty-five miles out of Oxford: 'You refer to our trip to Oddington, which was during the summer of 1928. That was one of the pleasantest days I ever spent. The Professor's enjoyment made me feel, after all, that the automobile was perhaps worth while. I remember him particularly, sitting at the head of the table when you served Sunday afternoon tea. His interest in little children I not only saw, but I have heard it mentioned many times in Oxford. There are very few who will ever forget his "birthday

cakes". I also remember a talk which I had with him, one day in the garden. He then told me that the amount of idleness to be found in Oxford, particularly among the younger dons, was simply appalling. This, I believe, more than anything else forced me to work whenever I was inclined to take things easy.'

Amongst other recent letters referring to the portrait, the following was written to me by the Head Master of the Grange Boys' Secondary School, Bradford. March 3, 1930: 'Dr. Wright's portrait in the School Hall, his Works, especially The Dialect Dictionary in the School Library, are a permanent reminder of his character and his greatness. It will be the pleasure and the pious duty of my colleagues and myself to keep his memory alive in the minds of generations of boys entrusted to our care as a stimulating example of heroic achievement and noble service.' A Thackley lad, studying at Durham University, wrote at about the same date: 'Dr. Wright has been a source of inspiration to me. I have known his story from the years of my boyhood, and have not wearied of listening to accounts of his early struggles told by some of those who remembered him at home. Though lacking any slight spark of his genius, I have tried to follow him in tenacity of purpose and perseverance which marked him through all the strenuous years of life. And I think that his wonderful story of Yorkshire grit and will to conquer must be an inspiration to many more. It will be an everlasting regret to me that I never saw him face to face. Yet the portrait which he so kindly gave me will keep his memory green. It hangs in my bedroom at home, which is also my study, so that I have had constantly before me one of the heroes in the realm of knowledge.' Remembering how unaffected Joseph Wright was by eulogy, these stories remind one of the saint who prayed that only his shadow might influence others for good, lest he himself might be uplifted by pride.

And now I come to the grand finale of his working life on earth. To relate the beginnings of the end, I must perforce go back chronologically from the point which I had reached in

telling of the presentation of the portrait in 1926. In 1922 when we returned home from our usual August holiday he said he felt ashamed of having been idle so long. Before his operation it was a common thing for him to begin to chafe against enforced idleness after the third week of a month's holiday, but now for two years he had been obliged to give himself a rest from creative work. To make amends for what he considered lost time, he took it up again in the autumn of 1922 with redoubled energy. I have already quoted the letter he wrote to Mr. Wade in February 1925. The 'three substantial books' mentioned in it were written in two years. Although he writes in this February letter of unimpaired powers of mind and body, yet the strain of that prodigious outburst of vigour was secretly telling on him. Nature was subtly beginning to put in her claims against an overdraft which had been running for sixty-four years. The first real warning came in June 1925. The illness to which he refers in the letter to Mr. Wade, as having happened in January, was apparently an accident. We never knew what caused it. He had had an attack of bronchitis and asthma in the earlier part of the winter, and we had gone to Weston-super-Mare for him to recruit. He was already feeling practically well again, and able to walk some distance, when he was quite suddenly taken ill one afternoon with what I thought must be another internal ulcer. At the risk of seeming to stray into fields beyond the recognized confines of biography, I feel impelled to include this incident, in some detail, because it again shows Joseph Wright—as before at Leicester—when yet strong and able, facing imminent death with absolute calm. It was not that he consciously steeled his mind and nerves, nor that he made a brave show for my sake, it was simple, natural faith, a perfect readiness cheerfully to do—or suffer—the next thing which *had* to be done, or borne. Added to this, his habitual confidence in me left him unruffled by minor fears or fussed by hurried arrangements. Providence ordained that the doctor summoned by the landlady was an eminent London surgeon. I have a vivid recollection of the

scene in that lodging-house parlour: the doctor sitting beside the table with a look which grew graver and more anxious every minute; and Joseph Wright lying on the sofa, every now and again saying, 'I feel perfectly well, doctor!' whenever a bout of sickness allowed him to speak. Presently the doctor told us plainly that it was a 'kink' inside, that there was no time to lose, the patient must be conveyed at once to a Nursing Home for an immediate operation. Joseph Wright coolly observed that this was rather a serious conclusion to come to in such haste, and he suggested calling in another opinion. The doctor gladly agreed, and whilst he went to fetch a colleague, I was to put the patient to bed. Happily the bedroom was on the same floor, for scarcely had we got there when Joseph Wright fell half-fainting across the bed. It was at that moment that what the doctors regarded as a miracle must have happened—the 'kink' straightened itself. The evil symptoms forthwith ceased. However, the doctors could not, as yet, realize that surgical help would not be required, so Joseph Wright was quickly transported in an ambulance to a Nursing Home. When he was safely installed, and the two doctors came up to his bedside, he said cheerily: 'Well, doctors, I don't know what *you* feel like doing, but *I* feel more like eating a beef-steak than having an operation!' They did not give him leave to eat a beef-steak, but they allowed him to forgo the operation, and he quickly recovered. The surgeon said afterwards, that in all his previous experience he had never known a parallel case of such alarming severity right itself without the intervention of surgery, and he added quite simply: 'By the grace of God the kink undid itself.' He certainly told us we must not spend holidays in isolated places, but otherwise there was nothing that ought to be done or left undone, and within a month, as the letter to Mr. Wade shows, Joseph Wright was working as usual. I do not think there was any connexion between this illness and what I have named the 'warning' in June of that same year. This was the occurrence of the first of his so-called 'strokes'. We were sitting together in the garden one warm



evening, when Joseph Wright bethought himself of a letter which must go out by the 9 p.m. post. He got up from his chair and found himself unable to walk, his right leg being almost powerless. After a few minutes' rest he managed, with my help, to walk into the study, where he sat down to write his letter. With intent to deceive myself more than him, I said: 'It's the effect of this thundery heat, I think.' 'Then,' said Joseph Wright, 'you've no business to think, you know nothing about it, I've had a *stroke*.' He achieved the letter, but the weakness had also affected his right hand and arm. He was kept in bed only a few days, for on this first occasion the power soon returned, and at Settle, in August, he walked as usual, miles and miles, often along very rough and steep moorland tracks, fearlessly spending long days on the hills alone with me and the dog. His Yorkshire friends thought him so completely restored that some time in October they asked him to come and address the Rotary Club in Bradford. Knowing, however, that he had twice been ill that year, the Secretary's letter contained an offer of hospitality which surpassed my already exalted notions of the generosity and fellow-feeling of Yorkshiremen: 'Amongst our members are Dr. —, one of our ablest surgeons, and Dr. —, an equally able general practitioner. In case of need, either or both gentlemen will give of their best.' Nevertheless, Joseph Wright thought it wiser to decline the invitation and remain quietly at home.

The following year we were again in Yorkshire. A Bradford newspaper under 'City Topics' announced that 'Dr. Joseph Wright and Mrs. Wright are spending a holiday in the Settle district, and are having a delightful time walking among the hills and in the villages round about. The eminent Oxford professor, who, it will be remembered, recently retired from the Chair of Philology at Oxford University, has been in the habit of spending a vacation with his wife in this their favourite part of Yorkshire, where they have many friends who are always pleased to renew what has been a long and interesting friendship. In the Windhill and Idle districts, where Dr. Wright, as

everybody knows, spent his boyhood, the residents will learn with pleasure that the professor's health has been completely restored, and that he is equal to a day's good tramp in the hills of Craven.<sup>1</sup> He was not, however, quite so robust as this implies, for he had begun to suffer somewhat from giddiness, and he was glad to avail himself of the opportunity of getting advice in Settle from Dr. Middlemiss who had so correctly diagnosed his condition in 1919. I find he had mentioned it in a letter to Professor Holthausen as early as October 5, 1925: 'Unfortunately I had a slight stroke some months ago, which has left me with a certain amount of giddiness from time to time.' And he wrote on May 19, 1926: 'I have been suffering from a severe attack of asthma and bronchitis, which for some reason or other has left me with giddiness.' He wrote to Professor Harting on October 15, 1926: 'We had a delightful holiday in Yorkshire, and are feeling all the better for it.' In spite of this improvement, Joseph Wright felt that he was not able during that autumn and winter to work as hard as had been his wont. In a letter to Professor Holthausen, dated December 11, he wrote: 'I am not just now making the progress in work that I should like, in consequence of this wretched giddiness, but I hope that it will soon be better.'

The next undoubted 'stroke' was in January 1927. He was reading the newspaper, when it dropped, and both his hands fell on his knees. Again his courageous will-power asserted itself. I was writing on the other side of the room, and had seen nothing. Without saying a word to me he got up from his arm-chair, and sat down to his table to write a note to the typist he was employing at the time to make copies of a circular letter he was sending out, offering the *Dialect Dictionary* to subscribers at a reduced rate. He managed to write the note, and enclose the circular letter to be dated February 4, and then he called to me: 'Come and address this envelope. I have tried three times, and can't do it.' I felt something was wrong, but I did what he asked, and then begged him to get back into

<sup>1</sup> *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 20, 1926.

his arm-chair and rest. By then he could not stand, for both his legs were partially helpless. Still, his amazing calmness was uppermost, all he said was: 'You needn't stamp that envelope. I daresay I shall never want her to type those letters.' The spirit which had borne him up against fearful odds in the struggles of his early life was unquenchable, even now when forces over which he had no control were arrayed against him. These attacks were, in medical language, due to a 'spasm', a temporary contraction of a cerebral artery, and were not actual 'strokes' leaving destruction behind. The power returned, but each attack left him with a little less strength than before. There was no shielding him from them, a minor one sometimes occurred when he was asleep at night. He would wake up with a difficulty in controlling the speech organs; and quite unawares came a distressing 'emotional' phase, which troubled him for a long time. His eyes would fill with tears over something which gave him pleasure. When he told the doctor about this, he added: 'But I am learning to control it. I say to myself, "Get thee behind me, Satan", and it goes off.' Two or three winters at about this period, he had suffered from an attack of bronchitis, and the cough may have accentuated the tendency to the more insidious trouble. Medical skill could do very little. A specialist who saw him in June 1927 could only tell him not to 'over-fatigue' himself in mind or body.

A German friend—Professor Arnold Schröer, of Cologne—who came to Oxford, and saw Joseph Wright at this time, described his visit as follows—I translate the German: 'I also bade farewell—for this life—to Joseph Wright, now Professor Emeritus, formerly successor to Max Müller, who is so intimately connected with German scientific study. Still happy and smiling, he bears the limitations of age: "I have had my good innings!" He asked about his German friends, and about our doings, with his old fidelity and cordial interest. It fills him with justifiable pride that the study of English philology is now also in England flourishing vigorously at the Universities. When I told him about our students, how bravely they

had struggled through those unpropitious times, with their indomitable idealism, the eyes of the good old Yorkshireman became moist. When I was taking leave of him, he produced some copies of his *English Dialect Grammar*, and gave them to me with the words: "For your best Old English students!" In peace, mutual understanding and appreciation, and a glad-hearted sharing of the world's work for humanity, thus happily and hopefully the old hand on to the young generation the flaming torch of their own hard-won knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

We went as usual to Settle that August, but Joseph Wright could no longer climb his beloved hills, except in a motor-car. I think that is why I only like motoring as a means to an end. Driving thus along roads, I was conscious of so much sadness and regret in the thought that never again could we have those exhilarating walks, with the turf under our feet, alone together in those wide spaces. Joseph Wright was content to enjoy the blessings of sunshine, and air, and the sight of his loved Yorkshire Dales, which yet remained to us, and these things gave him fresh strength and happiness. On his return home he worked steadily at a new edition of his *Middle English Grammar*, adding more material, and correcting proof-sheets with all his customary zeal and accuracy. In a letter to Professor Harting he wrote:

October 22, 1927. I am delighted to hear that you have now got well into your work at the University. It always takes some time before one can get into the full swing, but it will now become much easier for you. I am still able to do some work, but not by any means as much as I should like. I had a bad illness at the beginning of the year which has left me rather giddy. We went to the Yorkshire dales for August and a part of September. This change did both of us a great deal of good in spite of the poor weather. . . .

It is evident that as this year drew to a close he was reasoning out a great decision, making up his mind that when this piece

<sup>1</sup> Translated from *Kölnische Zeitung*, July 28, 1927.

of work was finished, he would lay aside his pen. He wasted no words in vain regrets. He knew the quality of what he had always written, and he told me he did not mean to spoil his reputation by continuing to write if he could not maintain his own high standard. On January 26, 1928, he wrote to Mr. Wade as follows:

I had intended to write to you long ago, but I have been prevented from doing so by a weakness in my right hand. I am still able to do some work, but not so much as I could wish. Since I returned from Settle in September, I have seen a large and revised edition of one of my Grammars through the Press, and it will be published some time this month. I have definitely given up all idea of ever writing a new book, or of finishing the one I was writing<sup>1</sup> before my illness. I hope I may be spared just to see dear old Yorkshire once more before I am taken, and then I shall be satisfied. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Professor Curtis of Frankfurt has sent me the two following letters written to him:

*Jan. 4, 1928.*

We were very pleased to receive your New Year's greetings, which we reciprocate most heartily. We were very sorry to hear of all your family troubles.

Old age comes to all of us in due course, but we do hope that your University pension scheme will provide decently for your old age. All our Universities now have an excellent uniform pension scheme, and those of us who retired before it became fully operative were handsomely treated. . . . In spite of the wretched giddiness from which I suffer I am still able to do a bit of work, but I shall never attempt to write any more books nor to finish the book I was writing.

*Feb. 8, 1928.*

I have just finished a new and revised edition of the M.E. Grammar, and have great pleasure in sending you a copy by book-post. As you will see I have preserved the original plan

<sup>1</sup> The Latin Grammar.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Yorkshire Evening Post*, Jan. 26, 1928.

of the book, but have introduced many minor changes. To overburden it with a mass of details would only confuse young students and prevent them from 'seeing the wood for the trees'. I am still able to do some work, but not so much as I could wish. If you happen to know Holthausen's present address, I should be thankful if you would kindly send it to me, as I should like to send him also a copy of the new edition. . . .

By now the words, 'I have had a good innings', were frequently on his lips, when the doctor or kind friends spoke to him of his health. Professor Schröer had carried them back with him to Germany, as typical of Joseph Wright's attitude of mind under the weight of advancing years. Anything approaching religiosity or affectation was entirely foreign to his nature. He would say to me, 'If a man is a Christian, he cannot be afraid to die', and in that saying was his conclusion of the whole matter. He had from the very beginning followed the Preacher's dictum, 'Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man', but that was not all. A belief in the fundamental truths of Redemption and Immortality lay at the basis of Joseph Wright's religion. He used to say, 'I could write down all the essentials of my religion on the back of a postage-stamp, and'—he often added—'leave room to sign my name as well'. But underneath a short and simple creed was a faith strong enough to enable him to lay down his tools at the close of his working-days with the same calm steadfastness of heart and mind in which he had taken them up when he first started on life's road. Of late years he never attended church, except sometimes when we were away at Settle or Sidmouth. He left off the habit during the War, because the sermons he heard then seemed to him so remote from current needs. Owing largely to his nonconformist upbringing, he looked upon the sermon as the main feature of the service, and next to that he liked to hear the old-fashioned hymns sung to well-known tunes in which the congregation could join heartily. After we had our wireless, the Sunday

evening service provided by the B.B.C. was a delight to him to the very last; and on occasions when some special ceremony gave him the chance of hearing a morning service too, he liked to boast that he had 'been to church twice'. He was a devout worshipper with the congregation of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and would talk familiarly of 'Dick Sheppard' and 'Pat McCormick'. The depth and reality of his religious faith, coupled with his practical wisdom, was what supported us both when our only son and then our only daughter were snatched from us. My cry was: 'Why? Why? They were so beautiful, so good, so full of promise!' Joseph Wright said: 'If we understood we should be on a level with God: there would be no Almighty to Whom we could look up. We do not *want* to understand. All we know is, that it is the best for them, and for us.' And then, as a stricken father, he would say: 'This is a bitter pill, but it has to be swallowed.'

He was 'spared to see dear old Yorkshire' twice more. To avoid the difficulties of changing trains on the journey, we now went as far North as we could without a change, and then motored the rest of the way to Settle. We drove from Pontefract to Settle on July 31, 1928, and stopped to have tea at a small hotel at Harewood. It was not by any means an ideal 'Yorkshire tea', but I remember it as one of many occasions when Joseph Wright's good humour seemed to conjure up happiness out of nothing. The girl who was serving brought us tea and 'boughten' cake, but no bread and butter. When she had left the room to fetch it, Joseph Wright remarked: 'She *looks* gaumless!' Our young driver and his brother doubled up with laughter, and all the other guests in the room joined in the general mirth, even the lady who was too genteel to admit openly that she understood the vulgar tongue grew purple in the face with a suppressed desire to laugh.

Before we left Settle that August, our good friends Mr. Arthur Davy of Wyke and Mr. Fleming, the Editor of the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, arranged to take Joseph Wright one day to Thackley, to revisit his grandfather's old home.

Mr. Davy fetched us in his Rolls-Royce, and we drove first to Windhill to see the cricket-field which had been permanently secured for the village Sports Club, and the pavilion which the members had built with their own hands. I have already described the grandfather's house, close to which formerly stood the cottage where Joseph Wright was born. The staff-photographer for the *Telegraph and Argus* was taking numerous snapshots, first on the cricket-field, and then in the garden of Park Hill House. Joseph Wright was too tired after so much sight-seeing to walk down Ellar Carr Lane with me to where the Atkinson grandparents had lived, though it was but a very short distance. The photograph of him which I have placed at the beginning of this Biography, smoking his pipe, seated on a bank with a Yorkshire 'dry wall' behind him, was taken without his knowledge at the time, when he stopped to rest in the lane, not many yards from his own birthplace, towards which he was looking, and only a little farther from the birthplace of his mother across the field behind him. To complete the pleasures of the expedition, we were entertained at tea, in true Yorkshire fashion, first by Mr. and Mrs. Fleming in Thackley, and later by Mr. and Mrs. Davy at Wyke. Joseph Wright was delighted with everything, and I felt it was like touring with Royalty, more especially next day when I read the account in the *Telegraph and Argus*, describing how Dr. Joseph Wright—accompanied by Mrs. Wright—visited the scenes of his boyhood. Now that we had to depend on a motor for taking us about on the moors, we were fortunate in being able to hire an extremely comfortable car, equal to any hill in the district, owned by the son of a former landlady of ours in Settle. John was a careful driver and devoted to 'the Professor', helping him in and out of the car, and bearing him company if I went off for a stroll with the dog at one of our halting-places. John always lunched with us on these occasions, and we looked to him to tell us where to find the best place for the purpose. 'Now, John lad, come and have a bit of lunch'—from Joseph Wright—was the prelude to many a happy meal at a Yorkshire



inn. Our favourite motor-expedition was to Dent. Mercifully the roads thither are not safe for heavy traffic, so the bus and the charabanc leave it in peace; indeed, unless a charabanc had the vertebrae of a snake, I doubt if it could negotiate the one cobble-stoned street which cuts through Dent like a letter Z, and a small-sized one at that. The houses line the street, without leaving room for any pretence of a pavement, or even bare earth enough for a nasturtium to grow. Some relatives of John's kept the George and Dragon, and we could always count on a hot meal, excellently cooked and served. The pity was that we could not stay some days there and have more time to enjoy the silent loveliness of Dentdale. When John drove us to Bradford to catch the through train to Oxford, on our homeward journey, there occurred one of those tiny incidents which come like a flash of lightning in the dark, revealing hidden beauty surrounding us. There had been a hearty Yorkshire handshake and a 'Good-bye, John lad, and thank you for all you've done for us', when John laid his hand on Joseph Wright's arm and said, 'Tak care of yourself', nothing more. Somehow the tears came into my eyes, and the busy railway terminus with all its ugliness, and noise, and bustle had vanished, and only love was there; love unconsciously evoked by one great human soul in another yet young in life's experience. Wherever Joseph Wright was he made the people about him feel that their concerns were his, and that he belonged to them personally. Nurses in the Leicester Hospital, students at Lady Margaret Hall, landladies in Yorkshire lodgings, thought and spoke of him as '*our* Professor'.

The summer of 1928 was a very hot and dry one 'down South', though we had plenty of rain in Settle during August. After our return home Joseph Wright was able to sit out in the garden all day and every day for five weeks of unbroken sunshine. In earlier years he was fond of working in our 'Thackley' garden. He considered it one of the most satisfying of rewards to see plants and fruits grow out of the earth in response to human labour. He took special interest in the fruit, and had

a business-like eye for estimating a crop. I used to ask him to look at the raspberry canes and tell me how many pounds of raspberries there were ready to be gathered before I decided whether to make them into jam or bottle them, and his estimate always proved correct. The apples and pears were a great joy to him, and he worked hard at the picking of them every year as long as his health and strength allowed. But now he had come to a time when to walk once or twice round the garden was all that he could manage, and he was contented to spend long summer days sitting out under the quince-tree reading, or perhaps just pensively smoking his pipe. He never fretted, and self-pity was a thing unknown to him. Often when I asked him, 'How do you feel?' he would revive an old familiar joke of his and reply, 'With my hand'.

At the end of the Summer Term I had resigned my own teaching which had grown considerably since the War, and now included the Non-Collegiate men students working at English. We decided that I was too old to go on successfully any longer, so now we began together the preparation of this Biography.

In October of that year came the rejection by the University of his offer of money for the enlarging of the Taylor Institution. This, as he himself says in a letter I have already quoted, was 'a great blow'. He said very little about it, only listening quietly, without any trace of bitterness of spirit, to the wrathful outbursts of his friends; but nevertheless, the hurt went deep. Certain it is, too, that his previously undiminished faculty for sound sleep was destroyed for some months, and all that winter the doctor and I were seeking means to bring back restful nights.

Towards Christmas he wrote three short letters to Professor Curtis, occasioned by a purchase of Grammars:

*Nov. 27, 1928.*

I am very pleased to supply you with the M.E. Grammars. . . . I was surprised to hear that you are still at the University, but as you are presumably well there is no great hurry for you to give up work. Unfortunately I am no longer able to do

much work, much as I should like to do more. I suffer so terribly from giddiness and lately from sleeplessness, but I must not grumble for I have had a pretty good innings. My wife has retired from teaching now so that she is now able to devote all her time to her new book.

*Dec. 4, 1928.*

I am very pleased to supply you with 18 further copies of the M.E. Grammar. I will give instructions for them to be sent to you tomorrow. I suppose Imelmann will take up his duties in the summer Semester. I have never heard of him, but that does not mean much. From the open letter which I recently wrote to the Vice-Chancellor you will see that I have been trying to do something for Modern Languages here, but have failed. I am sending you a copy by this post.

*Dec. 11, 1928.*

Many thanks for the cheque which I have duly received. . . . I am very pleased to hear that your sons are now doing so well. The long continued illness of your wife must have been a source of great anxiety to you, but I do hope she will soon be better. Fortunately I have always been blessed in regard to the health of my wife, and since I have been ill she has been a wonderful comfort to me. She is perfectly well, but at the end of last Term she has given up all teaching. She is now devoting the whole of her spare time to the writing of a life of her husband, but I don't think that I can manage to live to see the complete work.

Trouble also befell his eyesight about this time. A slight haemorrhage occurred at the back of the left eye, and for a few weeks he could not see anything with it. Afterwards the sight returned in some measure, but though he had been able to read comfortably as much as he liked with only one eye, when the other eye began to 'clear' it did not, in its partially recovered state, work well with the good eye, and reading became difficult and tiring. From the spring of 1929 onwards he read very much less than had been his wont even after he ceased working.

As he never grumbled about increasing infirmity, it was only by direct questioning that I found out why he left off wishing for fresh library books to read. I often said to him that, for my part, I hated growing old, and having to give up doing things, and that I looked enviously at young girls who could play tennis and run, as I did once upon a time. To this Joseph Wright would reply: 'I have no wish to live my life over again. I have done my best, and have nothing to reproach myself with. I am quite content.' Later, when I re-read his letters to me, I found written as long ago as September 8, 1896: 'I have done my best, and shall do it till death takes us away.' He could look back, knowing his vow had been fulfilled to the uttermost.

In 1929 we went as usual to Sidmouth for three weeks at Easter. We had, each year, the same large sunny rooms, almost on top of the sea, opening on to the Esplanade, where Joseph Wright could sit outside in the sunshine, or take a short and easy walk. Ever since his operation in 1920 it was so important that he should have the requisite creature comforts indoors, that when we had discovered suitable lodgings we went to the same ones year after year. And both at Sidmouth and Settle we experienced such kindness and forethought from our landladies that we seemed more like guests than lodgers. In 1928 our Easter holiday by the sea had been made doubly pleasant to Joseph Wright by the presence of Dr. Wolfgang Keller, from Münster, who was spending a few weeks in England. After coming to see us two or three times in Oxford before our departure, he followed us down to Devonshire. I quote from a letter he wrote to me recalling his stay at Sidmouth—the original letter is in English:

*Münster*, 15.3.1930. Professor Wright was far more to me than a dear friend or an admired scholar: he was one of the few people whom I have really loved. I felt happy whenever he talked to me, or when his dear old face in which all the kindness of his heart was reflected, was looking at me. No other holiday sojourn in my life gave me more joy than those Easter days

which I was allowed to spend in his company at Sidmouth, and I shall never forget our common walks every morning, and his conversation full of the wisdom of old age. That was two years ago, and I feel deeply sorry that I could not repeat my visit to England last year. Now the picture above my writing-desk has to remind me of this short but deep friendship, and fill me with gratitude towards fate for having been allowed to enjoy it. Remembrance is the most valuable possession which God has given us, and the only one which nobody can take away from us as long as we ourselves do cultivate it.

The weather during this our last visit in 1929 was fine and warm, and although Joseph Wright could do very little walking, yet we were able to be out on the Esplanade, or on the cricket-field facing the sea, for some hours daily, and he came home feeling much invigorated by the change of air and scene. As the summer wore on, he began to look forward again to seeing his native county. I had almost said country, for to the true Yorkshireman, his county is his homeland. 'Where I'm at home' was one of Joseph Wright's phrases, when referring to words or customs belonging to Yorkshire. A few days before we started North, he said to me with all his usual holiday gaiety and zest, 'We'll have a good time in Yorkshire, Lassie!' At Settle he mostly spent his time sitting in the garden at the back of the house. Our landladies, the two Miss Fells, were more than ever solicitous for his comfort, indeed they were almost like daughters in their constant care and attentions. I often told him that he represented to them a reincarnation of their own father, an old Dalesman, whom they had tended when age forced him to give up his farm. The garden was only a narrow strip, but the low fences dividing it from neighbouring strips were no bar to a roaming eye, so that we seemed to be sitting in acres of garden with nothing to interrupt the view of fields and hills beyond. Quiet though our holiday was, we both enjoyed it. In a letter from Professor Brauholtz (March 2, 1930) he mentions hearing Joseph Wright speak with happy

recollections of this last visit to Yorkshire: 'I shall not soon forget the last time I had tea with you, little more than three weeks ago, when he talked with such reminiscent pleasure about your holiday in Settle last summer, and looked forward to his usual spring visit to the South Coast.' For some weeks before we left Oxford, I had been increasingly anxious about Joseph Wright's state of health by reason of a general lassitude which had gradually come over him. Talking was becoming more of a permanent difficulty, and he often seemed too weary even to listen to what other people said. Dr. Middlemiss was shocked by the change in him since the previous August. Very soon, however, the bracing air 'up North', and a fresh medicine given him by Dr. Middlemiss, produced a decided improvement, and happily a lasting one; for, although the power of summoning the right word might be more or less in abeyance, his vital interest in things and people around him was once more alert, and never again deserted him. Dr. Middlemiss wrote of him later: 'In spite of all his struggles and difficulties, he was always the boyish optimist'; and another friend recalling these times wrote: 'His spirit seemed quite unquenchable by ill-health. He was able to make the very most of the last years of his life, as he had made the most of it from the beginning: in a sense that is true of few people.'

In the preface to his *Grammar of the Windhill Dialect*, Joseph Wright draws attention to the fact that he spoke his native dialect till he was 'practically grown up'. It is well known that people who have learned to use a foreign language as their ordinary speech, tend to revert in old age to the language of their childhood. The same thing now happened with Joseph Wright, not by reason of age, but because of the weakened control of speech-organs. His *a*-sound in such words as *man*, *lad*, and the *u*-sound in words like *come*, *up*, were now pure West Riding. We both laughed over an inadvertent, 'Ah'm bahn rahnd t'gardin', one day, and I said it was a mercy that I could understand the Windhill dialect, if he was going to readopt it in such thorough-paced fashion. One Sunday at

tea he remarked to a student who lived at Hull, 'You coom fro Ool' [pronounced to rhyme with *wool*], to the mystification of the poor girl, who did not recognize her native town in this homely guise. He did not go back to using dialect words instead of standard English ones, nor did he address his friends as 'thou' or 'ye', but his vowel-sounds slipped back to their oldest form and gave an added touch of natural homeliness to his speech.

A small legacy which came to me that autumn had been expended on a new wireless set and a revolving wooden shelter. The latter—which we termed 'The Hutch'—was the greater boon to Joseph Wright of the two, for it enabled him to be out in the garden even in the winter, beyond the few minutes' time his limited walking powers allowed. It gave him real happiness to sit there, in the middle of the lawn, when the sun shone, warmly wrapped up and screened from any cold wind. 'I can never thank you enough for this', he said to me one day when I had joined him in 'The Hutch', but there was no debt on his side. I had already been repaid a thousandfold in seeing and knowing that my gift had prolonged his enjoyment of the simple delights of the open air in a cherished garden. He had said before we were married, 'We shall never grow old to each other', and no prophecy was ever more completely fulfilled. He never left off welcoming me back if I had been out without him; nor did he even in these last years of failing health ever accept my help—by day or night—without gracious words of gratitude and thanks. Not that such words were needed. As in old days when we walked for hours on the Yorkshire moors, and seldom spoke, so now we sat in silence by the fireside, perfectly happy just to be together. Indeed, there seemed a sense of greater peace and beauty now than in the dawn of love; of something deeper than the satisfaction of working side by side. His personality had not been weakened by bodily infirmity, nor dulled by the passage of time. When I took his hand to steady him as he walked from one room to another, he usually quoted cheerily as we went, 'We'll journey together to

Zion', a line from one of the hymns sung in the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Windhill.

The writer of the Saturday sermon in *The Times* of July 28, 1928, on 'Simplicity', defining what he calls 'true simplicity', might have been describing Joseph Wright. I cut the article out at the time because of this aptness: 'There are men and women who seem to have entered the world endowed with this gracious gift', this 'singleness of mind'; and he goes on to say that 'it is not seldom allied with genius', which is also true of Joseph Wright. It was this 'true simplicity' which marks all that he did throughout his career; it gave him cheerfulness in times of hardship; it kept him free from pride and vanity when success crowned his labours; and now in these last days it showed itself in a serenity of resignation which defied sadness, a calmness all the more beautiful because it was so perfectly natural, the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. A distinguished fellow Yorkshireman wrote to me in March 1930: 'It is always the moral qualities which tell in life, and his were pre-eminent. The memory of him we have will always be of one of the great homely characters.' Sir Michael Sadler wrote (Feb. 28, 1930): 'He was one of the greatest of Englishmen, great in character, great in humanity, great in scholarship. His work will never be forgotten. It is built into the fabric of learning. But the power of his will, mind and manhood inspired us all. For nearly fifty years he and I were friends, and I was always the stronger for his example. In him, as a great Yorkshireman, my wife and I feel Yorkshire pride.' Other friends told of similar feelings: 'I am thinking of one whose passing is a matter of world-wide concern—not solely for his great scholarship but because of the greatness of his character, so great is its simplicity. You know I count it one of my greatest privileges to have been taught by him, and to have had the joy of knowing him.' 'Dr. Wright was a *great* man not only intellectually, but in the warmth and breadth of his sympathies; and amidst all the earthly honours which fell to him, he ever retained the heart of a little child.' 'It seems to me



his life was a story of great adventure, a story of great achievement, a story of triumph over what to ordinary folk would have been overwhelming odds—at times his life will read like a fairy-story—and through it all will run the golden threads of a great brain, a great heart, a great mind, great instincts, and a great gentleness and simpleness.’

It has been said that no greater service can be rendered by man to his fellows than that rendered by one who is an example of ‘the Christian character, in its purity, energy, and grace’, for such a one wields ‘the lordship of goodness, the regnant power of a trained and disciplined life’.<sup>1</sup> This was not only true of Joseph Wright’s working life in the world, from boyhood upwards, but it was still marvellously true of him even now when all outside activities had been cut down by physical weakness. People who had never known him in the full vigour of his manhood, who came in contact with him for the first time in these his last months, were struck by the strength and nobility of his character, and felt its influence on their own lives. It had been the same when he was lying ill in the Leicester Infirmary. The Ward Sister wrote of him: ‘I always felt the Professor was such a friend. When I was depressed it always cheered me to come in and see both of you. One always had the feeling that that wonderful serenity of his meant that the world was all right really, if only one took it in the right way.’ Students who came up to Oxford in October 1929, and had only seen him two or three times at Sunday teas, when he could hardly talk to them at all, yet had learned to love him for ‘his kindness, and his wonderful interest in all of us young people’. A tutor at Lady Margaret Hall wrote: ‘Even in these latter years of retirement and ill-health he was an inspiration to those who came in contact with him, both of the undergraduate generation, and of the older like myself, to an extent that I think must be most unusual.’ Most remarkable of all was the profound impression he made on Dr. Hobson, who first began attending him in September 1929. He said of him: ‘He seemed

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *True Pre-eminence*. *The Times*, May 24, 1930.

to me to be the personification of Sir William Osler's ideal of *Aequanimitas*.' Of all the letters I received, none went to my heart so truly as this, because it meant a recognition of the greatness of Joseph Wright dominant still through the final trial of his last illness. He had been present at the usual Sunday gathering on February 16, 1930, eagerly following all the conversation, laughing at the jokes of the young people round him, and joining in the general talk now and again. It was quite a happy party, that last Sunday. Next day, late in the evening, a previously slight cold became—it seemed in a few moments—a severe attack of pneumonia. He made a brave stand against it for ten days, but his strength was already undermined, and his hitherto fine constitution and recuperative power could not long bear the heavy strain. He had always had an extraordinary faculty for remaining absolutely motionless by the hour together, even in robust health. I had often wondered how it was possible for anybody to sit or lie so still for so long. This power had many times stood him in good stead, more especially just after his operation. In these last years it had grown to be a habit, forming a sort of natural partnership with the serenity of mind within, a partnership which was in no way loosened or destroyed even now when assailed by such a fell disease. Nor could the advancing weakness rob him of his cheery good humour. Only two days before the last one of all, when the doctor came up to the bedside saying, 'Well, Professor, how do you feel to-day?' there came the immediate response which I knew so well, 'I feel like a morning star', and he went on to say quite happily, 'I am sure I am stronger to-day'. In the night the nurse, hearing him cough, and finding it had given him no relief, had said, 'It was only noise, then?' 'Yes, Nurse', said Joseph Wright, 'all noise like a political meeting!' But before the next day dawned he had withdrawn from the conflict. His spirit was not quenched, but he knew the foe was stronger than he; that on this earthly battle-field his fighting days were over; so he silently laid down his arms. When the doctor appeared that morning, Joseph Wright said to him quite

calmly and rationally, 'You know, doctor, it was never any good from the start'. Later he shook hands with his day-nurse, and thanked her for having cared so well for him; and turning to me, he told me to give her a present of money. She told me afterwards that she thought he was 'depressed', but it was not that. He was simply doing just what he had always done before when about to start on a journey, and would no longer need the services of some kind helper beside him. It was all perfectly natural.

There was only one thing more which had to be done, a last message to leave behind on the last day of all: and so he gathered up his strength in the midst of a long stretch of silence, and framed his lips to say to me quite clearly the one word 'Dictionary'. It was, in essence, a humble echo of the words of One greater than he, when the hour had come: 'I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' At the time I thought all he wanted to say was to remind me of his wish to be 'remembered by' that one literary achievement. Later, when I came to re-read his letters which had lain in an old red morocco case for over thirty-four years, I saw in that one word a message and a reminder of deeper significance. Might it not be that he was thinking of the Dictionary as the seal and token of that priceless and imperishable gift he had given me long years ago, which had sustained every moment of our life together, the love which is stronger than death? He wrote of the Dictionary: 'It is a work that is a most sacred task to me. . . . Had it not been for you, nothing in the world could have induced me to undertake what seemed an impossibility to everybody else. But deep genuine love can overcome impossibilities'; and also—as I have already quoted among the extracts from these letters: 'It would be premature to enlighten the world at present, but someday it will all be made known what a man's deep love for a woman can inspire him to do.'

He died in the evening of February 27, 1930.

And so, without fear, and without reproach, the great soul of

Joseph Wright passed on out of our ken in all its undiminished glory, going on to shine, to inspire, to create in another world. As his greatness of soul in its rise was unself-conscious, and without vainglory, unmindful of, and uninfluenced by, outside worldly circumstance, so was the gradual setting all calm and peace, unruffled by loosening hold of earthly things, secure in the knowledge of having fulfilled Duty, of having *achieved*. And we, who are left behind, shall remember Joseph Wright, and thank God upon every remembrance of him.

At the farewell service on March 3, 1930, in the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin, we commemorated his life in the words of John Keble's hymn:

*Bless'd are the pure in heart,  
For they shall see our God;  
The secret of the Lord is theirs,  
Their soul is Christ's abode.*



## APPENDIX

### A MEMORANDUM ON THE PROFESSORiate

By JOSEPH WRIGHT

*Corpus Christi Professor of Comparative Philology*

APART from a few occasional slight digressions this Memorandum deals exclusively with: (a) Boards of Electors to Professorships; (b) The Stipends of Professors; (c) The Duties of Professors; and (d) Professorial Pensions.

The author trusts that the Commissioners may be willing to consider the Memorandum and to interrogate him on matters contained therein, so far as they are relevant to the Commissioners' Inquiry into the affairs of the University.

#### *Boards of Electors to Professorships*

The general principle adopted by the last Commissioners for the constitution of electoral Boards was that the Boards should usually consist of seven members, according to the following scheme:

1. The Vice-Chancellor;
2. A member elected by the Hebdomadal Council;
3. The head of a College, often also a member elected in addition by a College, if it contributed the whole or part of the Professor's stipend;
4. The remaining members of the Board were often of a very miscellaneous and heterogeneous nature.

This method of constituting the electoral Boards was found to be unsatisfactory and was accordingly abolished some years ago. It was felt on all sides that the Faculties should be strongly represented on the Boards, and this principle, with the exception of the Faculty of Law, was generally adopted in the reconstitution of the Boards. A normal Board of electors to a Professorship now consists of seven members according to the following scheme:

1. The Vice-Chancellor;
2. A member appointed by the Hebdomadal Council;
3. Two members appointed by a Board of Faculty, one of whom must be a Professor of this or some other University. [This restriction does not apply to the Science Professorships];

4. A member appointed by a Meeting of the whole Faculty concerned;
5. The head of a College and also a member elected in addition by the College, if it contributes the whole of the Professor's stipend.

When a College only contributes a part of the stipend, one member is elected by the General Board of the Faculties.

When a College contributes no part of the stipend, one member is elected by the General Board, and one member is usually elected by some one of the Boards of Faculties.

All the elected members serve for a period of five years and are eligible for re-election at the end of that period.

The reconstituted Boards of Electors have met with general approval, and few, if any, people would desire to see them changed.

#### *The Stipends of Professors*

At the time of the last Commission there were 44 Professorships at Oxford, and for 40 of these Professorships the Commissioners made a Statute concerning each Professorship which, with few exceptions, became associated with some College on the understanding that the College would provide the whole or a defined portion of the emoluments assigned to the Professorship. The normal stipend was to be £700 a year in addition to a Professorial Fellowship of £200 a year. Two of the Professorships for which the Commissioners made Statutes, viz. the Professorship of Applied Mechanics (St. John's and Magdalen Colleges), and the Corpus Christi Professorship of the Romance or Neo-Latin Languages, have never been brought into existence, although the University authorities have on various occasions pressed hard for the realization of the latter Professorship. But a little investigation on the part of the Commissioners will soon reveal to them that there are other things in which the Colleges have not to this day fulfilled the obligations imposed by the last Commissioners' Statutes.

After drawing up the Statutes for the separate Professorships, the last Commissioners classified most of the Professorships in three Schedules according to the emoluments, the duties, and partly according to the subject attached to each Professorship. Schedule A contained the Professors whose stipends were over £600 a year, who had to reside at least six months in each academical year, and had to give not less than 42 lectures during the academical year. Schedule B contained the Professors whose stipends were not over £600 a year, who had to reside at

least four months in the academical year, and had to give not less than 28 lectures during the academical year. And Schedule C contained certain Professors of Science whose stipends were over £600 a year, and who had to give at least 28 lectures a year, in addition to giving instruction on three days in each week, for seven weeks in each Term.

It was clearly the intention of the Commissioners that the stipends of the Professors in Schedules A and C should eventually be £700 a year in addition to a Professorial College Fellowship of £200 a year. And with few exceptions these conditions were fulfilled by the Colleges concerned. But since the last Commission, many Colleges to which Professorships were attached have, owing to the remissness on the part of the University authorities, been allowed to change their Statutes in such a manner as to make the stipends, including the emoluments of Fellowships, free of Income Tax, so that these Professors now receive what is practically equivalent to nearly £1,100 a year. Those Professors whose stipends happen to be derived from the University Chest or from other sources regard this as a gross injustice. And what has been said about Income Tax in regard to the Professors in Schedules A and C also applies to most of the Professors in Schedule B, and also to the holders of some of the new Professorships. In this manner the University has been deprived of several thousand pounds a year, which would otherwise have gone automatically into the Common University Fund for the benefit of the University at large.

Since the last Commission the number of Professorships has increased from 44 to 66. The last Commissioners did attempt to classify the Professors according to the stipends they were to receive and the duties they were to perform, but the stipends of the 22 new Professors depend neither upon the importance of the subject they represent, nor upon the amount of the statutable duties they have to perform, as will be seen from the following few examples:

The Merton Professor of English Literature receives £900 a year free of Income Tax, and has to give 28 lectures a year, whereas the Marshal Foch Professor of French Literature receives £900 a year, and has to lecture and give instruction for 126 hours a year. The Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Language and Literature receives £500 a year and has to give 28 lectures a year, whereas the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon, the Taylorian Professor of Romance Languages, the Taylorian Professor of the German Language and Literature each receives £500 a year, but



each Professor has to lecture and give instruction for 126 hours a year. The Serena Professor of Italian Studies only receives £523 a year, but he has to lecture and give instruction for 126 hours a year. The Professor of Chinese receives less than £100 a year, but his duties are practically identical with those of a Professor in Schedule A who usually receives £900 a year. It is to be hoped that the Commissioners will see that these and similar anomalies are remedied.

The present distinction between Professors in Schedules A and B ought to be abolished. It is quite useless, except in special cases, to have Professors who only lecture in two out of the three Terms, owing to the lack of continuity in the teaching of the various subjects, such as Arabic, Celtic, Byzantine and Modern Greek; Geology, Political Economy, Military History; Interpretation of Holy Scripture, Exegesis, &c. The Professors of these and several other subjects ought to be required to lecture in all of the three Terms, and their stipends ought to be increased to £900 a year.

The Commissioners will doubtless be furnished officially with the exact amount of stipend each Professor receives, and how much of each stipend, if any, is paid free of Income Tax. I made an effort to procure this information, but the authorities who could were unwilling to supply it. One thing, however, is quite certain, viz. that it will be quite useless for the Commissioners to rely upon the Statutes relating to the various Professorships for this information. Such Statutes are now often very misleading. The stipends of all the following Professors should be brought up to £900 a year:

Laudian Professor of Arabic (£502), Chichele Professor of Military History (£500), Taylorian Professor of Romance Languages (£500), Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon (£500), Taylorian Professor of the German Language and Literature (£500), Serena Professor of Italian Studies (£523), Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek (£500), Jesus Professor of Celtic (£600), Oriel Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion (£600), Regius Professor of Medicine (£410), Professor of Chinese (£97), Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis (£343), Oriel Professor of Interpretation of Holy Scripture, Professor of Political Economy, Professor of Geology.

There is, furthermore, a whole class of Professors whose stipends should be raised considerably, viz. the stipends of the Professors in Schedule C and the stipends of the Professors who have the same duties as those in Schedule C. If Oxford is to get and to keep the best Pro-

fessors as heads of the various Departments of Science, it will be necessary to pay them stipends in the future of at least from £1,200 to £1,500 a year. In Continental Universities, and especially in Germany, where so much importance is attached to the Departments of Science, all the Professors in the most important branches of Science are highly paid, partly in stipend and partly in fees.

Again, the Professor of Music might in past times have been a mere ornamentation with a stipend of £130 a year, and with the statutable duties of one lecture a Term, but now there is a Board of Studies consisting of nine members who regularly organize lectures and teaching in the subject, and the subject should accordingly be represented by a properly full-paid Professor with the statutable duties of an ordinary Professor.

Again, the stipends and duties of University Readers should be thoroughly investigated. It will be found that Readers can be conveniently divided into two categories: (a) Readers who hold in addition to a Readership some College appointment, such as a tutorship along with a Fellowship; such Readers are adequately paid for the duties they perform, in fact some of them are in receipt from all sources of a higher stipend than an ordinary Professor. (b) Readers whose sole emoluments are derived from their Readerships, such as the Goldsmiths' Reader in English, the Readers in Russian, Egyptology, Assyriology, Ophthalmology, &c. The stipends of all these Readers should be substantially raised.

And in like manner the stipends and duties of University Lecturers require to be investigated in precisely the same manner as those of the Readers. And it will be found that for a large portion of this part of the University staff the University positively sponges upon the generosity of the Colleges, in so much as it hardly ever pays the Lecturers of this type more than from £100 to £150 a year. But there is, however, a large number of University Lecturers who are not in so favourable a position financially as those I have just described, viz. those University Lecturers whose emoluments are solely dependent upon the lectureships they hold. These Lecturers, with their heavy duties, their responsible position, and the importance of the subjects they teach, are utterly inadequately remunerated for their services. One illustration will be sufficient to make this point clear: The present stipends of the staff of Lecturers in Modern Languages vary from £180 to £200 a year, and each Lecturer is required by Statute to lecture and give instruction

during eight weeks in every Term, and for nine hours at least in each week. And there is not a single Member of the staff who holds either a College Lectureship, or Fellowship, or any other University appointment. The Lecturers of this type should be divided into two categories, viz. Senior Lecturers and Junior Lecturers. The stipend of a Senior Lecturer should be from £500 to £600 a year, and that of a Junior Lecturer from £300 to £400 a year. These stipends would then compare favourably with the scale of stipends for Lecturers recently adopted at all the Scottish Universities. In the Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister to inquire into the Position of Modern Languages in the Educational System of Great Britain will be found the following remark on the stipends of the Modern Language Staff at Oxford, p. 42: 'The salaries provided indicate the inferior esteem in which the subjects are still held. The staff at Oxford consisted of a Professor of the Romance Languages, a Professor of German, three Lecturers in French, two in German, one each in Spanish and Italian, and one in the Scandinavian Languages, a visiting Lecturer and an Assistant in Phonetics; and the total stipends of these twelve persons, including their share of fees, were £3,385 7s. 6d., or an average of about £282 each. . . . This is the situation in the richest and the oldest of our British Universities. It appears to us to need no comment. The best that can be said is that twelve years ago things were far worse.'

Under present conditions Oxford does not utilize to the best advantage the considerable amount of high intellectual attainments and first-rate ability which exists among some of the University and College Lecturers. In most Faculties there is a small number of College Lecturers whose attainments, abilities, and contributions to the advancement of learning are quite equal to those of the Professors of the subjects, and in some Faculties, as, for example, in the Faculties of Literae Humaniores and Modern History, the number of such men is not inconsiderable. As things are at present few, if any, of these men can aspire to become Professors of Latin, Greek, or Modern History at Oxford, because of the very small number of Professorships in these subjects, although they are by far the largest in the University. It is my firm conviction that steps should be taken immediately to raise the status of these men by establishing a number of Extra-ordinary Professorships in all the more important subjects of the Arts and Sciences. It would be quite an easy matter for the University and College authorities to arrange between themselves the stipends and duties—College and University—to be

assigned to the Extra-ordinary Professors. Each Professor should be appointed for a period of not more than five years, and should be eligible for reappointment, but as a rule no Extra-ordinary Professor should hold office for more than ten years in all. By this means the University teaching staff would become greatly strengthened. It would be a source of great encouragement to the younger men of ability to become experts in their subject, to put their best energy into their work, to further the advancement of learning in general, and it would also enable such men to obtain Professorships more easily at other Universities, and last but not least, it could not help acting as a strong stimulant to many of the ordinary Professors from every point of view.

### *The Duties of Professors*

It has already been pointed out in an earlier part of this Memorandum that the Statutable duties of a Professor do not necessarily depend upon the amount of the stipend he receives, and it was also shown that in many cases the greater the duties the less are the stipends. Having said all that I wished to say about stipends, I should now like to be allowed to say something about the duties of Professors in general. It is a thorny subject, and one which has been much debated among the Professors themselves in recent years. Their views are so diverse that it is hopeless to expect that they will ever come to any mutual agreement upon the subject, so that if any change is ever to take place, it will have to be brought about by some outside body like a Commission. In dealing with this part of the Memorandum I feel very nervous and anxious lest any Professor should think that I am referring to him in particular, and in order to dispel any such idea, I should like to say emphatically at the outset that anything I have to say about the duties of Professors is purely impersonal. And, furthermore, I wish to exclude from my remarks all the Science Professors who belong to Schedule C, and the Professors who have the same duties as those in Schedule C. It will, I think, be generally admitted that all these Professors have exceptionally heavy duties in addition to those of giving lectures and practical instruction in their laboratories.

There is not only a difference of opinion among the Professors about what the duties of an Oxford Professor should be, but there is also a difference of opinion among University and College Lecturers. Some people think that a Professor's duties, as a teacher of the subject he professes, should be very small, in order that he may have ample leisure

to write learned books and articles, and to take a leading part in the Republic of learning. People who hold this opinion should consult the British Museum or Bodleian Catalogue. And perhaps some Members of the Commission may be willing to do the same.

Other people look down upon the Professors and regard them as a superfluity. This feeling is especially common among College Lecturers whose subjects are associated with the intercollegiate system of lectures. And it must be admitted that there is some justification for this point of view, because the Professors whose subjects come within this system do not and cannot, under existing conditions, exercise any influence upon the organization and the teaching of their subjects as Professors. If they exercise any influence at all, it is only by virtue of their personality. In fact, the ordinary teaching of Undergraduates for the Honour Classical and Modern History Schools would practically go on just the same with or without the Professors. Such an anomalous state of things would be impossible at any other University in the world except, perhaps, at Cambridge.

Other people regard a Professorship as being a meet and just reward for long service as a successful College Lecturer and Tutor, and in their opinion no further serious duties, whether in teaching or in the advancement of learning, can reasonably be expected from such a man elected to a Professorship. Now it must be admitted that the Oxford Professoriate is often recruited from this source, and often also with injurious results to the best interests of the University. Some of these Professors are often much too old when they are elected to the chairs. Their mental and physical energies have been sapped, and they have become fossilized and intellectually benumbed by the long and arduous years devoted to preparing their pupils for examinations, so that they are no longer able to perform the functions and duties which ought to be expected of a Professor. And some Professors of this type have been so long accustomed to regard everything at Oxford entirely from the Collegiate point of view, that whenever University and College interests are in conflict they invariably take the side of the College, however much the University might suffer in consequence.

On the other hand, there are many people who are of opinion that the prime and most important duties of a Professor are to teach others the subject which he professes, and also to take a leading part in organizing the teaching of the subject connected with his chair. This is undoubtedly what is primarily expected of a Professor at all Continental

- Universities, and also at all the modern English Universities. At Continental Universities a Professor is required to lecture and give instruction for at least six hours a week for a much longer period in the year than 21 weeks, and most of the Professors at these Universities have other exacting duties besides those of teaching. They have to conduct a great number of examinations, especially University and State examinations which occupy much of their time, and yet in spite of all these heavy duties, no one would deny that these Professors, as a rule, do more original work in the shape of writing learned books and articles than is usually done by Oxford Professors, notwithstanding their sole duties being practically limited to 28 or 42 lectures a year, with vacations extending to 31 weeks.

If the Professors at Oxford are to exercise any material influence upon the studies of the University, and to be intimately in touch with the general teaching of their subjects, it is absolutely necessary that their duties should be considerably increased. In such subjects as Classics and Modern History, where the intercollegiate system of teaching and lecturing is practically supreme, they are almost entirely out of touch with the men reading for the Honour Schools in these subjects. And what else can be expected so long as a Professor's duties merely consist of giving 42 lectures a year? Under this system it is impossible for a Professor to come into direct touch with the undergraduates, and to discover which and how many of them are worth special attention being paid to them in their studies. I can speak from long personal experience that it is in just this method of coming into direct touch with the men in classwork and in private intercourse that a Professor can exercise that stimulating influence upon men which encourages them to take a keen interest in their studies, and to aspire to a higher and wider standard of knowledge than is usually required for examination purposes. It is only in this way that men can be taught how to work for themselves in a scientific and scholarly manner, and to be in a position to pursue their studies further after they leave the University. This method also acts as a great stimulant to the Professor himself, widens his outlook, causes him to make many original investigations which he would probably otherwise leave untouched, and inevitably incites him to publish the results of his investigations for the benefit of other scholars. But this method also bears other important results. It enables a Professor to see clearly what the real difficulties are which an able undergraduate has to encounter in his work, what the material defects are in the existing

text-books, and to remedy the difficulties and defects by the writing of new text-books. Continental Professors attach very great importance to the provision of first-rate text-books in their subject, but here it is generally thought to be beneath the dignity of a Professor to write such books, whereas in reality it is only a Professor, who knows his subject from all points of view, who is in a proper position to do work of this kind. And in my opinion, at least, it is far more useful to devote much time in writing good text-books for the benefit of the undergraduates in one's own generation than to spend half a lifetime in meditating about the writing of learned and 'definitive' works which in the end generally remain unwritten.

It has sometimes been urged that it should not be the duty of Professors to teach the ordinary undergraduates, and that it would be detrimental to the best interests of the advancement of learning if their duties were materially increased, because it would not leave them ample leisure for 'Research' work. But my firm conviction is that the increased duties would have a beneficial effect upon Professors, and would induce them to be more productive than they are at present. My idea of increased duties is not that Professors should be required to give at least six formal lectures a week for seven weeks in each Term, but that they should be required to give at least two or three lectures a week and to hold classes and give instruction for three or four hours a week. And unless Professors are to have these increased duties, and also to have statutory powers to enable them to exercise their influence on the organization of the teaching of the subjects connected with their chairs, I believe that it would be best to abolish the Professorships in those subjects which are directly connected with the intercollegiate system of teaching, and to devote the money thus saved to more useful purposes, because, in my opinion, a University staff and an intercollegiate staff are incompatible in the teaching of the same subject, and the object which each has in view is so entirely different.

In subjects like English and Modern Languages the situation is quite of a different nature. Here all the teaching and the organization of the studies are under the control of University staffs, who thus have a free hand to develop and organize the teaching, untrammelled by College influences, with very beneficial results from a financial point of view.

It will doubtless be a part of the Commissioners' work to investigate how far the teaching at Oxford is conducted economically, consistent with efficiency, and I feel sure it will be found that the intercollegiate

system of teaching is not only wasteful in money, but also in time and energy. A mere glance at the terminal lists of lectures issued by the Boards of Faculties will be sufficient to show what a vast amount of duplication of work exists. And I believe that when the Commissioners have made a thorough investigation into the financial resources of the University and Colleges, it will be found that there is absolutely no need whatever for any annual grants from the Government for the provision of an efficient teaching staff, even if the number of undergraduates were twice as large as it was in pre-war times. That there is something wrong with the proper marshalling of these financial resources is shown by the simple fact that the annual income of Oxford with about three thousand students is nearly double that of Berlin University with its thirteen thousand students. And surely no one, who has any first-hand knowledge of Berlin University, would venture to assert that the teaching provided there was inadequate. If the present income of Oxford from all sources were efficiently and economically administered it would be found to be amply sufficient for meeting all the current annual expenses connected with administration and the teaching required in all the various Departments and Faculties. What Oxford University—apart from the Colleges—does seriously lack is capital for the erection of new and necessary buildings, and for the extension of some of the old ones, e.g. the Taylor Institution, which is now wholly inadequate for the requirements of the teaching given there, for the housing of the Library and its regular expansion. The University certainly has not sufficient funds for such capital expenditure. And for purposes of this kind it is perfectly justified in appealing to the Government for financial help to enable it to carry on its work efficiently.

When establishing the recent Professorships of Modern Languages the University evidently acted upon the principle that the prime function of a Professor is to teach, because each of these Professors is required by Statute to lecture and give instruction for at least six hours a week in each of the University Terms; and similarly all the Lecturers are required by Statute to lecture and give instruction for at least nine hours a week for eight weeks in each Term. Nearly all the lectures and classes in Modern Languages are held at the Taylor Institution. And as the Curators of the Taylor Institution appoint all the Lecturers, and pay their stipends, and in addition contribute about £1,000 a year towards the stipends of the Professors and of the Reader in Russian, they naturally exercise a powerful influence upon the development of



Modern Language Studies in the University. And yet there is not a single one of these Professors on the Board of Curators. In my opinion the Board of Curators would be considerably strengthened if these Professors were made *ex officio* Members of it.

And when the University converted the Rawlinsonian Professorship of Anglo-Saxon into the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professorship of Anglo-Saxon, the duties were changed from 28 lectures a year into 'to lecture and give instruction for six hours a week in each of the University Terms'. Although the duties of the late Merton Professor of English Language and Literature were the same as those of Professors in Schedule A (i.e. 42 lectures a year), he almost invariably gave from three to four lectures a week in every Term besides taking one or two classes a week, and yet he found ample leisure to do much for the advancement of learning. But when a short time ago the Hebdomadal Council proposed to increase by Statute the duties connected with this Professorship whilst it was vacant, it was so violently and virulently opposed by a Professor whose duties are 28 lectures a year with a stipend of £900 a year free of Income Tax, that Council eventually let the matter drop!!

### *Professorial Pensions*

Oxford has many pressing needs, but the most pressing need of all is the establishment of an adequate Pension Fund which shall include the present as well as the future Professors, so as to enable them to retire voluntarily on attaining the age of sixty, and to require them to retire on attaining the age of sixty-five. Seventy years is too high for the age limit. It should be sixty-five at the highest. Few men are really efficient as Professors beyond that age, especially if they are responsible for the organization and control of any Department of Studies.

Any pension scheme devised should be made to include the present Professoriate, old as its average age is, otherwise the University would be made to suffer for at least another quarter of a century before any new pension scheme could come into full operation. Under the existing Statutes it would be impossible to compel the present holders of Professorships to submit to a scheme of compulsory retirement. But the Commission should bring about such changes in the Statutes as would compel the present Professors to retire on attaining a certain age by providing adequate pensions to meet their special cases. The plan would not be necessary for future Professors. It should be borne in mind that

the present Professors, with few exceptions, hold their Professorships for life, in fact hold a kind of freehold, and therefore in devising a scheme whereby they must retire at the age of sixty-five, they should be treated generously. It has sometimes been urged that the financial difficulties in the way of bringing the present Professors into any pension scheme are insuperable, owing to the great poverty of the University. But if the University authorities have the best interests and welfare of the University at heart, means can and will be found to provide the necessary funds. The income of the £10,000 which Mr. Walter Morrison gave many years ago for the establishment of a Professorial Pension Fund is now considerably over £500 a year; and the income of the Common University Fund has gradually risen from £8,250 in 1908 to £20,45 in 1918. So that it ought to be possible to allocate the whole or a considerable portion of the extra funds required from this increased source of income. The University might also increase its income by raising the University dues, and by exacting a greatly increased annual contribution from the University Press. It should also be borne in mind that the extra financial strain caused by including the present Professors within the pension scheme would cease after a comparatively small number of years.

Since the last Commission so many new studies have been started and old ones extended, especially in Science, that the Professoriate has increased in the meantime by 50 per cent., viz. from 44 to 66. And it is most important that the Professors in these new Departments, which are generally independent of the intercollegiate system, should not be obliged to retain their posts through the lack of pensions beyond the age usual at the Modern Universities, viz. sixty-five.

One advantage of a pension scheme will be that it will be ascertainable years ahead when any given Professorship will in the ordinary course of events become vacant, and I am not sure that it would not have some influence upon the work and zest of younger men who are not already Professors. At any rate, it could not have the depressing effect which exists now when a Professor can hang on until long after he is really able to discharge his duties efficiently.

The great difficulty against which Oxford has to contend in providing a satisfactory pension scheme as compared with any other University is that the age at which Professors are appointed is much too high, viz. forty-four years. A little investigation on the part of the Commissioners will show that the average age is much lower at Cambridge and much

lower still at the Modern Universities. In fact, it will be found that the average age at which Professors are appointed at Oxford is not very far short of what the average age is of the whole Professoriate at the Modern Universities. If a census of the present Professoriate were taken at Oxford it would be found that the average age is too high for it to be really efficient for the services which will inevitably be required of Professors in the near future. It would be found to be higher even than in Germany, where it is generally supposed that men are elected to ordinary (full) Professorships at a comparatively advanced age, but that such is not the case will be seen from the following figures which give the average age of the Professoriate in the various German States, viz. Prussia 54.5; Bavaria 53; Baden 53.2; Leipzig (Saxony) 55.8; Tübingen (Württemberg) 52.5; and Giessen (Hessen) 48.4.

In the establishment of any pension scheme, provision should be made for retirement before the age-limit in the case of a Professor who becomes what may be regarded as permanently incapacitated through ill health. Under these circumstances he might be paid a portion of the pension according to the number of years he has served, viz. about one-fiftieth of his stipend for each year of service, providing that he has served for at least five or six years and that the maximum of the pension does not exceed twenty-five-fiftieths of his stipend. This arrangement would get rid of the vile system of Deputy-Professorships.

The pension scheme should be contributory, say 5 per cent. of the Professor's stipend paid by the University, and 5 per cent. paid by the Professor. But the 5 per cent. contributed by the Professor should be returnable with compound interest in case the Professor should die before attaining the age of compulsory retirement. If the pension scheme were made contributory, the Professors and the Electoral Boards to Professorships would probably take an interest in it, and in electing to a Professorship some account of the age of the various candidates would be taken into consideration, just as is always done at the Modern Universities. And in this manner the present average age (viz. forty-four) at which Professors are elected at Oxford would be materially lowered. And we should then be spared the lamentable occurrence of seeing one Professor retire at seventy-six on account of old age, and another being elected in his stead at the age of over seventy-three, which is actually what happened on November 20, 1919.

The pension scheme should be such as to provide that a Professor shall receive at least one-half of his stipend as pension, if he continues

- his services until he attains the maximum age-limit, and has served for a definitely fixed number of years. And the scheme should undoubtedly be linked up with the Federated Superannuation System for Universities, so as easily to admit of the transference of a Professor from one University to another, along with the superannuation benefits from one University to another.

When the Hebdomadal Council devised a pension scheme some years ago (1913) it was made non-contributory, because certain Members of the Council were of opinion that a contributory scheme would considerably diminish the attractiveness of the Professorships. But this opinion does not exist at the other Universities. And unless we, too, have such a scheme, the financial cost will be prohibitive, and nothing will be done to remedy the evil effect of having no pension scheme at all. The scheme devised in 1913 provided that the funds set apart for pensions should remain under the control of the University and be administered by the Curators of the University Chest, so as to save any profits that might accrue, but it is pretty certain that Insurance Companies have greater facilities for investment and reinvestment than a body like the Curators of the Chest, and can therefore accumulate its premiums at a higher rate of interest than that which the University could realize on its pension funds.

- A Professorial Fellows' Pension Fund has already been started at two Colleges. And according to the Summary of Receipts and Payments of Colleges in 1918, with their direct contributions to University Purposes, issued by the Board of Finance (*University Gazette*, November 26, 1919, p. 213), Magdalen College appropriated £16,000 out of its income for 1918 to this purpose. The College authorities no doubt possess the statutory powers to allocate this large sum of money out of revenue, but one cannot help wondering whether this is not another of the many examples of the remissness or folly of the University authorities in allowing a College to change its Statutes, so as to enable it to apply funds to a specific purpose, which would otherwise automatically come into the University coffers and be used in whatever manner the University might think to be most expedient for its own purpose. This is a question which might well be seriously considered by the Commissioners for various reasons, the chief of which are: (a) The University authorities might easily urge it as an excuse for taking no action in providing a pension scheme for all Professors; (b) To consider whether, if these two Colleges—which notoriously have a much

larger income than they know what to do with—are to have a Professorial Fellows' Pension Fund, all Colleges to which Professorships are attached should not be obliged to establish a similar Fund; (c) Whether Colleges should not be obliged by Statute to hand over their surplus revenue for the benefit of the University in general.

A Committee of the Hebdomadal Council spent several years in trying to evolve a pension scheme for Professors, and eventually a draft Statute was presented to Council, amended, and, as amended, approved by it at the end of April 1913. The most important provisions in the Statute were:

1. It was only to apply to Professors appointed after a date to be specified later.
2. It was non-contributory.
3. There was to be compulsory retirement on attaining the age of seventy.
4. The normal amount of the pension was to be one-half the stipend, inclusive of any Fellowship held in connexion with a Professorship.
5. A Professor was not entitled to receive the normal amount of the pension, unless he had held the Professorship for at least ten years.
6. If a Professor had served the University for only nine years or less, his pension was to be diminished by one-tenth of the normal amount of pension for each complete year by which his period of service fell short of ten years.
7. If a Professor had served the University for twenty-six years or more, his pension was to be increased by one-twentieth of the normal amount of pension for each complete year by which his period of service exceeded twenty-five years; provided that no pension should exceed two-thirds of the Professor's stipend, inclusive of any Fellowship held in connexion with his Professorship.

The Statute was promulgated in Congregation in the following month. After the Preamble had been passed by Congregation, there then came the amendments which proposed that all the clauses relating to the financial side of the pension scheme should be struck out; and that the following clause should be substituted: 'Subject to the provisions of *Statt. Tit. IV, Sect. I, § 1*, the Pension Fund shall be administered according to a scheme to be prepared upon a report to the Hebdomadal Council from the Board of Finance, such scheme to be approved by Convocation.'

Another amendment was: That acting on the recommendation of the

Board of the Faculty of which a Professor is a member, the General Board of the Faculties should have power to continue a Professor in his Professorship until he attained the age of seventy-five.

The result of these drastic amendments was that Council proceeded no further with the Statute. And it is probable that no thoroughly acceptable pension scheme will ever be devised, unless it is taken up by some outside body like a Commission, with power to devise a workable scheme, and to enforce it, if necessary, by Act of Parliament.



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